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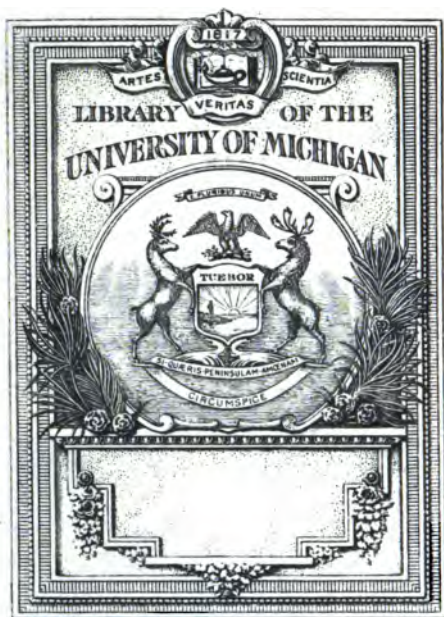
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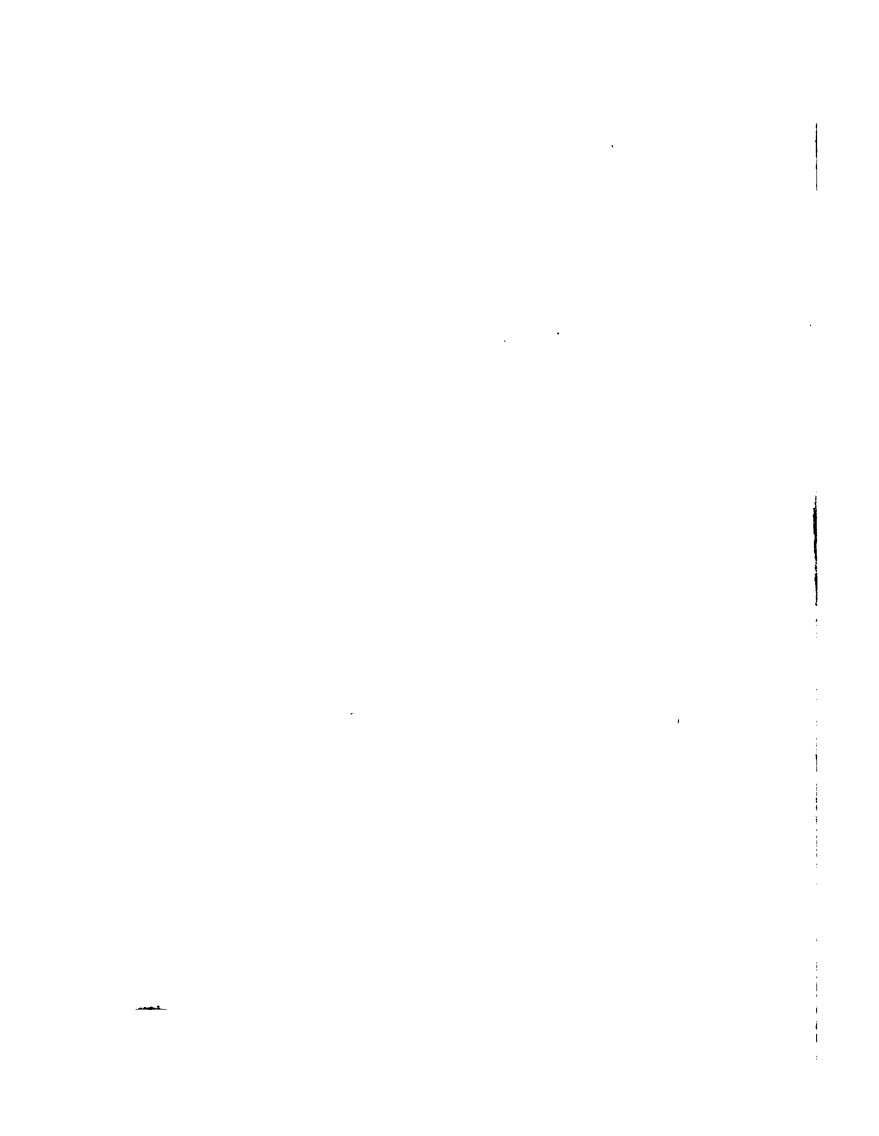
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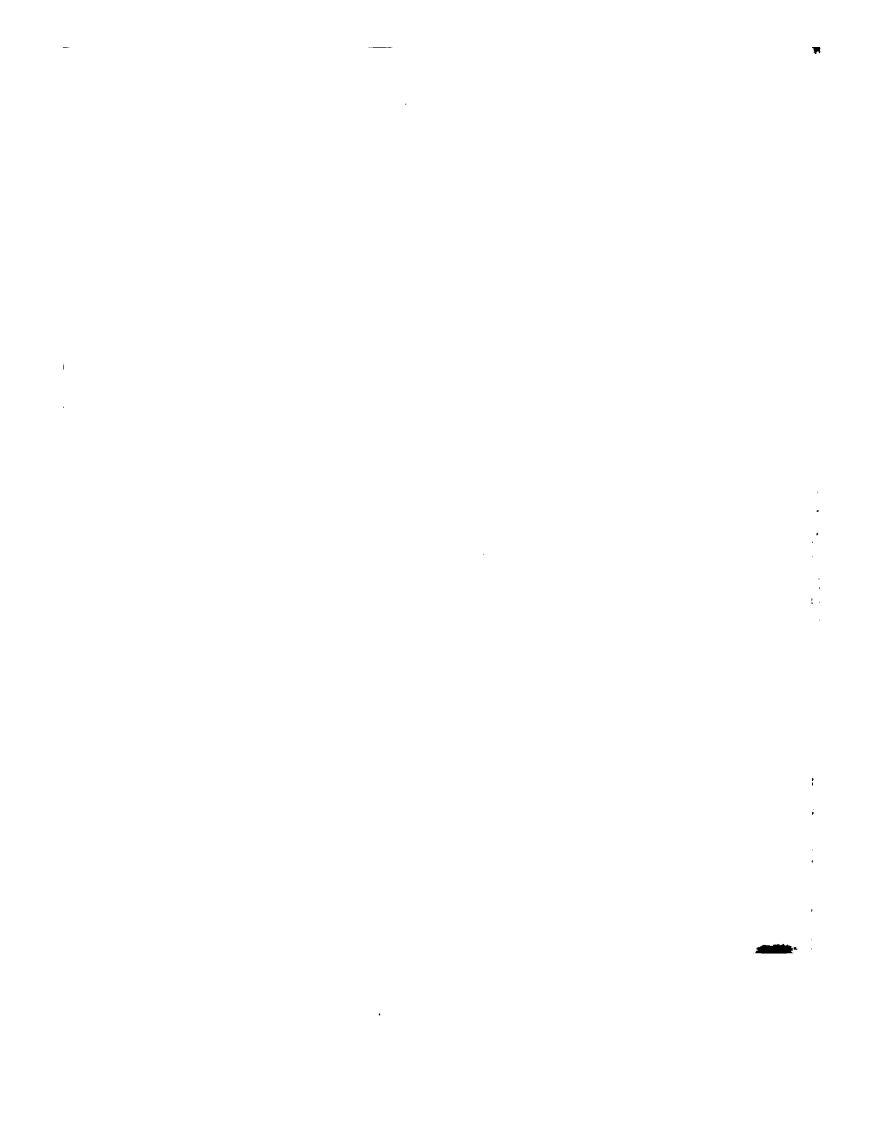
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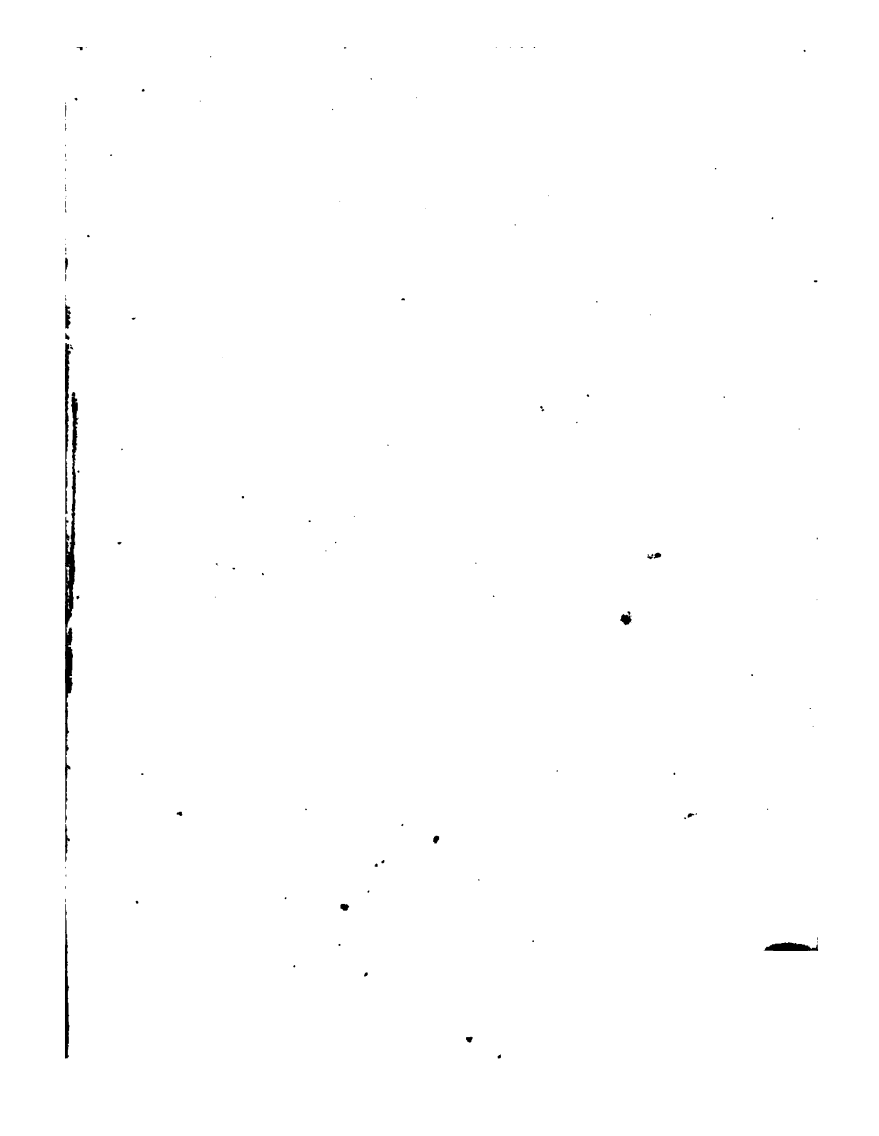
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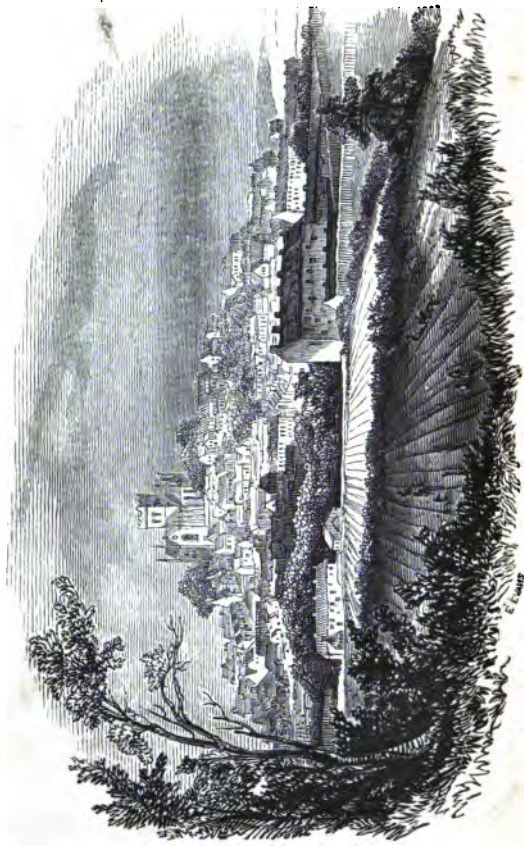
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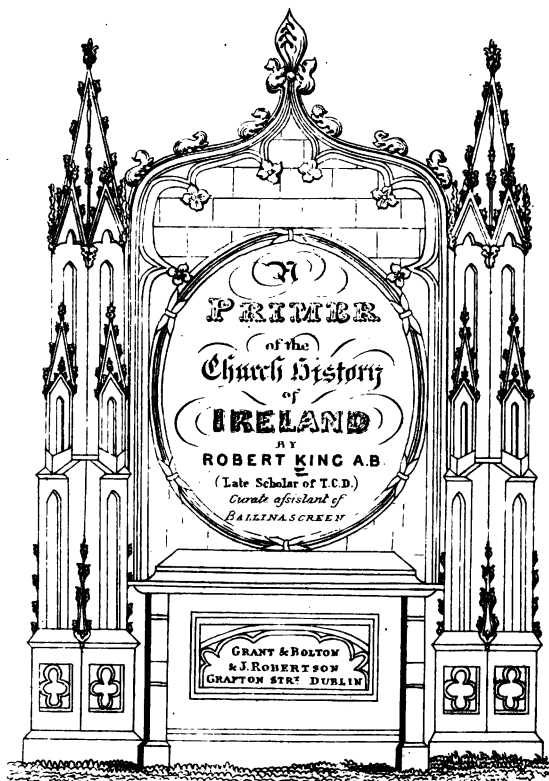








View of Armagh, Town and Cathedral, (from the East.)



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**A PRIMER
OF
THE HISTORY
OF
The Holy Catholic Church
IN
IRELAND,**

**FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE FORMATION
OF THE MODERN IRISH BRANCH OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.**

**THIRD EDITION.
IN TWO VOLUMES.**

VOL. I.

**DUBLIN:
WILLIAM CURRY, JUN., AND COMPANY,
GRANT AND BOLTON, AND J. ROBERTSON;
EVANS, CORK.**

1845.

DUBLIN:
PRINTED BY JAMES CHARLES,
61, MARY-STREET.

TO HIS GRACE

THE RIGHT HONORABLE AND MOST REVEREND LORD

JOHN GEORGE

ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH,

PRIMATE AND METROPOLITAN OF ALL IRELAND,

THIS ATTEMPT

TO COMMUNICATE TO THE UNLEARNED A BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF THE
PAST HISTORY OF THE IRISH CHURCH THAN HAS HERETOFORE
PREVAILED AMONG THEM

IS,

BY HIS GRACE'S CONDESCENDING PERMISSION,

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

AS AN HUMBLE TRIBUTE

OF DUE REGARD FOR THE HIGH OFFICE WHICH HE HAS BEEN
APPOINTED BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE TO FILL

IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,

AND THE MANY BENEFITS WHICH HAVE BEEN BESTOWED ON US
BY HIS INSTRUMENTALITY.

ADVERTISEMENT
TO THE THIRD EDITION.

It will be sufficiently evident from the price at which this book is sold, that it has not been published with a view to making money by the sale of it, the object contemplated in it being rather to disseminate information on the important subject of which it treats; and the price being accordingly fixed so low, as barely to afford a hope that the returns of sale may be sufficient to defray the necessary expenses attending the publication. It is desirable that they who approve of the design, and of the present manner of executing it, should endeavour to increase the circulation of the work, by making it known among their acquaintances, and especially among those who are in the habit of purchasing small works for distribution among the people, school rewards, &c. In this way much may be done to diminish the loss that may be incurred by the undertaking.

In the last year (1844) the plan was adopted, in at least one important parish, of holding an examination in the subject matter of this book, accompanied with premiums to the best answerers, and open to all who chose to become candidates. This plan has proved most successful in calling attention to the subject, and exciting an interest in reference to it; and it might probably if more generally acted on, (at least where it would not interfere with more important instruction,) be found productive of very beneficial results.

The second volume will be furnished with an enlarged collection of important original documents, (some of which are referred to in the present one,) and a copious index to the entire work. Some time must elapse before it is ready for delivery, but its publication will be accompanied with as little delay as possible.

It may be useful for purchasers to know meanwhile, that the numbering of the pages will be continued from the first volume on to the second. This will both simplify the index, and also make the two volumes more convenient for binding together, if any persons wish to have them done up in that form.

To the different friends who have exhibited a kind interest in the circulation of this little work in the form in which it has already appeared, it will be proper to give some explanation of the motives which have induced me to publish the present edition in the altered form of a two-volume book. I have done so for several reasons, of which it will suffice here to notice the following :—1. A desire to be somewhat more full and accurate led me from the beginning of this edition to insert in every part so much new matter, that the work grew on my hands by degrees until it became too large to be conveniently contained in one small volume, and as the printing had commenced, the size of the page (even had that been desirable) could not be altered. 2. Under the constant pressure of engrossing business, I have found the preparation of the work occupy nearly all the leisure hours of an entire year without coming very near a conclusion, and therefore to prevent any long delay, after the rapid sale of the former editions, it seemed expedient to bring out in a separate volume, the portion which was ready for issue. By this means also the remaining part may be prepared in a more leisurely

and careful manner. 3. It is hoped that this arrangement will be found a convenient one for purchasers of the book, as it is likely that many of those who may desire to procure it, can more readily pay for the two parts at different times, than for both together. And 4. It will for the author also be convenient that each part should thus be paid for separately, that something may be received towards the expenses of the first volume, before those connected with the second be added to them; as the publication of a large impression of a work printed in the expensive style here used, amounts to a very considerable sum.

Moreover by the present plan the work will be divided into two portions, each in some measure complete in itself. For the first, which embraces the period antecedent to the Danish invasions, comprehends a tolerably complete account of the religion of our ancient saints, who flourished in the times when the Church and state were both independent—so far at least as such an account could be given in a work of this kind. And the second volume, in like manner contains a clear statement of the introduction of papal jurisdiction into this

country, and of its subsequent suppression at the time of the Reformation ; together with a sufficient exposure of the false statements which represent the present Roman community in Ireland as connected by episcopal succession with the ancient Irish Church.

To facilitate the circulation of these volumes among the less affluent members of the community, some of them have been done up in stiff printed covers, to be sold at a reduced price, according to the arrangement made in the case of the second edition. Only a limited number of copies however can be issued in this cheaper form.

PREFACE.

IRELAND wants many things, and we have heard much concerning her wants. There is one thing however of which she has very great need, although there is little said about it in public ; and that one thing is, a little history of some of the most important occurrences which have taken place in the Irish Church since its first foundation. We have already some large books, and perhaps one or two of moderate size, throwing some light on the matter ; but we still want something comprehensive in plan, and published at such a price as to be within the reach of readers who cannot afford to purchase an expensive book, however they may desire information on this interesting topic. It is greatly to be regretted that while there is abundance of little works to be found in every book-shop, on almost every subject which one can think of, there has been hitherto the greatest scarcity, if not a total absence of any such as I here speak of.

And yet there can be no subject that ought to be more highly esteemed, after the sacred Scriptures, than the history of the Church ; of that part of it especially which has been established in the country in which we were born. Great part of the Bible itself is taken up with the history of the Jewish Church, and the account of the Almighty's dealings with it ; and although after the time of the holy apostles there were not inspired penmen to record with infallible accuracy the history of the Christian Church, still the subject does not cease to be interesting and instructive ; but on the contrary, the accounts of later ages, from the apostles' time down to our own, written by many of the pious and holy men who lived in them, are full of things well worth our study, and more useful too for us to know than a great deal of what is commonly read among us.

The history of the Holy Catholic Church in Ireland ought to be studied with delight by Irishmen especially. For if the highest privilege which a man can enjoy in this world is to be truly a Christian, and that Christian Church to which we all claim to belong, is (as we say in the Apostles' Creed) the Catholic Church, next to being a Chris-

tian, and a good Catholic Christian, there can be no higher honour than that of being an Irishman. All that is worth desiring or honouring in the way of religion or of country, is in my mind comprehended in the three names "Irish Catholic Christian." I would have Christian for my surname, Irish for my Christian name, and Catholic for my middle name. I do not of course mean *Roman* Catholic; for the phrase *Irish Roman* Catholic sounds queer in my ears, and almost like a contradiction in words; and the man that is a Romanist can scarcely be, in spirit, nationality, and true patriotism, more than half an Irishman. I hope that my reader if not already of the same opinion with me on this point, may with the Lord's blessing be more inclined to my way of thinking, when he comes to the end of the following little history, and sees how great enemies the court of Rome, and its head the pope, have ever been to the national and religious freedom of Ireland.

We want, I said, a small and cheap book on this subject; that it should possess these two qualities however is not enough: besides being of little size and cost, it should also be very accurate, and not

contain a single statement which is not founded on good and trustworthy original authority, so that no candid reader shall have occasion to object to any thing asserted in it, as if it were doubtful or untrue. It is the more necessary to be very cautious in this respect, because that from the want of such books as I speak of, the greatest ignorance has hitherto prevailed, and the grossest falsehoods and misrepresentations, have been circulated and believed, concerning the state of religion here in old times. In this little production I have done what I could to supply a work answering the description above given ; and whatever be its imperfections in plan, style, or matter, it will be found I trust, an honest and faithful account of the facts recorded in it ; I have certainly endeavoured to the best of my knowledge, judgment, and conscience to make it so. My authorities for all the most important statements will be found given at the foot of the page.

The controversy between the Churches of Ireland and of Rome is not about mere questions of Church History, but about the vital and fundamental truths of Christianity revealed in the Word of God itself. It is not therefore to be expected that where the

latter has been despised, and its testimony rejected, any knowledge of historical matters relating to religion, will touch the heart or awaken the conscience to a saving apprehension of the truths of the Gospel. Yet still when we see how much men are influenced by ignorant prejudices and false traditions, especially in matters of faith, it cannot but appear most necessary and important that the historical misrepresentations with which the Church of Rome has done so much to mislead the unlearned among us, should be met by true and plain statements, setting forth what was really the state of things connected with the ancient religion and ancient Church of our country. What use that foreign Church just mentioned has made of the national feelings of our people in reference to the matter under consideration, for advancing her own views and influence, is thus ably stated by the late Mr Phelan.*

"The Papacy," says he, "maintains its ascendancy, by an artful system of accommodation to the natural principles and motives of man. Of these it has chiefly taken to its aid in Ireland, that national

* See Case of the Church of Ireland, stated by Declan. Milliken, 1824.

spirit and pride of ancestry by which the lower classes of our countrymen are so amiably, yet so dangerously distinguished. The Irish are a fondly national people; they know little of their ancestors, but they believe of them every thing which enters into their conceptions of worth and greatness; and they feel a high, although mournful consolation, in turning from their own condition to the supposed freedom, and glory, and happiness of other times. These principles have been incorporated into their creed—they receive their religion as the last bequest, and the last token of their almost canonised forefathers, and they cling to it with a devoted and desperate fidelity.

“To cherish and keep alive this persuasion among them, legends, miracles, and prophecies, are devised with lavish but adroit profusion. Their religion is made to look venerable through the vista of antiquity—interesting in the garb and attitude of decay; and this interest assumes a dearer, and this veneration a holier character, from the sympathy of the Church with the fallen fortunes of her children. Thus the faith of a zealous Roman Catholic, though not that which either

the truly spiritual or the truly philosophic would prefer, comes upon him with the romantic power of a picturesque and melancholy grandeur. Its influence is aided by the habits of a rural life—it is recalled by the ruined abbey, and the tottering round tower—it is studiously associated with the hearths, the tombs, and the altars of its progenitors. It is similarly connected, and by similar artifices, with all those of whatsoever country, who in the first and purest ages of the Gospel departed this life in the faith and fear of God; until through a long line of martyrs and confessors—through St. Patrick—through the apostles—it finally blends itself with the Saviour of the world. The ambition which such considerations inspire is not to be estimated by political arithmeticians; it is not of earth alone; it seeks to combine earth and heaven, and it tinges even dreams of worldly aggrandizement with a ray of brighter and purer illumination.”

Yet these considerations, which exercise so powerful an influence over the feelings of our countrymen, have been too much, one might say, almost entirely, slighted by us: the candle of sacred history has been too passively allowed to

lie hid under the bushel, where the adversaries of truth have endeavoured to conceal it ; and in the absence of its light, misconceptions rooted in prejudice, and cherished by the unwholesome food of misrepresentations, have attained to all the rank but unhealthy luxuriance natural to plants growing in a dark place. It is strange indeed and amazing that such ignorance should ever have prevailed, as does exist on so important a subject, and one so deeply interesting to every Irish Christian, as that of the Church History of our own country. There is not a little girl that has got any thing of a boarding-school education of the very plainest sort, who has not learned that in A.D. 1066, William the Conqueror invaded England, and established his sovereignty there. None of our children learn what is far more important for them to know, namely, how our own Church, that had been originally free and independant, was in the twelfth century reduced into obedience and subjection to the bishop of Rome. Which of our children has heard of the Synod of Cashel? Nay, I will say, which of our parents? What one of them among five thousand has ever heard of the trans-

actions of that Synod, and of the age in which it was held? And yet that period is the turning point and pivot of our Church History.

I would make an humble effort in the following pages to do what others might have done better, but what has been altogether left undone; and I shall have the credit, at least so far as I know, of being the first to put in print for the use of my countrymen, a book of this size, sort, and price. It is for you parents and teachers, and friends, that it is intended. Present it to the young and inquiring, that they may learn a little at least of the state of their Church in times past, a deeply interesting, deplorably neglected subject: "tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation."

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.*

*Addressed especially to those of my readers who are members of the
Church of Rome.*

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,

The following little work is one which will, I have no doubt, be read by many of you with considerable interest. I am encouraged to anticipate this, both from the nature of the subject itself, and also from the kind reception given to the first edition, ~~by~~ different members of your communion, into whose hands it came. And I would further hope that the simple statement of facts here presented to your notice may, under the divine blessing, be made useful for the removing of many unjust prejudices and misconceptions. I am not so conceited as to

* This preface has been allowed to stand unaltered, (except in a few verbal corrections) as printed in the former edition, in consequence of its having met with approval from some kind patrons of the work, who judged it expedient that it should not be omitted in the present edition.

imagine that I am entirely free from all prejudices myself,—who is so?—or that no traces of them can be discovered in this work. But I trust that I am incapable of knowingly misrepresenting *facts*, and facts will be found to form the principal part of the contents of this work. They are given mostly in the words of original and authentic writers, with references directing the reader to those places where the passages quoted will be found ; and as far as I have introduced remarks or comments of my own you will find them free on the one side from that acrimony and invective which irritates without convincing, and on the other, from that over-affectionate and coaxing style, which in matters connected with controversy, you would perhaps be inclined to look upon as *palaver* and *blarney*. Matter-of-fact statements are what I would desire to bring before you ; leaving it in great measure to your own sagacity to draw conclusions. And while in a sincere desire for your good, I would avoid wounding your feelings by an unnecessary asperity in speaking of your Church ; I am not at the same time ashamed nor afraid to express myself as being as decidedly opposed to Rome, as were

the ancient Irish more than twelve hundred years ago, although I believe for far more serious grounds than those which then actuated them.

You will see from the whole tenor of this history, how utterly false is the supposition that the Church of Rome is the most ancient in this country. You will read here at what particular times many of its peculiarities were introduced among us. Thus you will see that in St. Patrick's time the clergy were allowed to marry, as they were indeed long after ; that he and St. Columba, with their followers, were ignorant of such a place as purgatory ; and that Holy Scripture was what they were most celebrated for teaching to all their pupils, and the chief cause of their great reputation : that the first pope's legate came to Ireland in 1139, that is seven hundred years after the propagation of Christianity in the country by St. Patrick ; and that as to the general feeling of the old Irish Christians towards the Church of Rome, they were so far from having any special regard for her authority in their brightest days, that they rather disputed with her in matters of small importance, (although then considered to be of most vital consequence,) and things

in which she was right ; as for instance, the rule for finding Easter. And in fine, whatever opinions or practices similar to those of the modern Church of Rome may have been admitted into this land before the twelfth century, you will see that it was not until that period that her authority was formally submitted to, or her doctrines, rights, and ceremonies, completely adopted by the Irish Church. You will find that St. Malachy and other Irish ecclesiastics, with King Henry II. of England, were the persons who brought this work to perfection ; and that those hated Saxons, as many of you are taught to style the English, were the persons by whose influence chiefly the system of Romanism was first established in Ireland.

It is of very great importance that you should observe, that the authorities for all the principal facts contained in this volume, are not what you would call Protestant writers, whose testimony you might naturally receive with suspicion, but many of them persons who lived long before the *name* of Protestant was used. They were men whose testimony, so far as it is applied to the present work, will be received with respect by all, but with the

highest degree of veneration by yourselves; most of them being claimed by you as bishops, saints, and confessors, of that ancient Church of which you consider yourselves to be now the only true representatives. St. Patrick, Bede, Aldhelm, Bernard, &c., are all numbered in the catalogue of your saints, and such other *ancient* writers as have quoted, are mostly high authorities with your Church; while even such *modern* ones, as Levan, Lombard, &c., whom I have had to refer to in a later period of the work, most devoted followers and promoters of the system to which you yourselves belong.*

You will see here what a character our country had for learning in ancient times. Our country was crowded to it from other lands, and here, looking upon Ireland as the principal seat of religion and learning in Europe. You too, what a noble spirit of zeal for the Christian knowledge was manifested by the people of this land, and how they were

* A glance at the references given in the text will show also what abundant testimony of Dr. Lanigan, Irish Church.

fluenced to receive from foreign parts the children of parents high and low alike, whom they supported and provided with instruction, and books to read, gratuitously. And you will see that the study which they prized most highly, and cultivated most carefully, was that of the Word of God; and that it was to read the Scriptures particularly, that so many persons came to study in Ireland in former times.

You cannot fail in reading these accounts to be struck with this last feature of ancient Irish Christianity, as a remarkable one. You will see how well St. Patrick was acquainted with the text of Holy Scripture, and how fond he was of quoting it,* and how much the same sacred study was attended to by St. Columba and his followers.† You will read of *fifty* persons coming in one vessel from the Continent (in St. Senan's time) to take up their abode in Ireland; their object being "either to lead a life of stricter discipline, or to *improve themselves in the study of the Holy Scriptures.*"‡ You will see that it was "*for the purpose of studying the Word of God,* or else to observe a stricter life," that numbers of the nobility and lower classes from

* Vid pp. 25, 26, 27.

† pp. 175, 320.


‡ pp. 73, 323.

England came to this country in the seventh century;* that it was thus Edilwin, who was afterwards a bishop in England, came here to be educated; and so Agilbert, who was afterwards bishop of Paris, “spent no small time in Ireland *for the sake of reading the Scriptures* ;”† and the famous priest Egbert in like manner, “spent a long exile in Ireland for love to Christ,” and thus became “*deeply learned in the Scriptures* :”‡ and Alfred, who was king of Northumberland, having been educated in Ireland, is described as one who was “*most learned in the Scriptures*.”§ And the same motive, a desire for this sacred knowledge, was that which brought hither Edilhun, and Eahfrid, and Willibrord the missionary archbishop of Utrecht, and Sulgen, the bishop of St. David’s, and so many others whom we cannot name here.|| And on Sundays when the people flocked to the church it was with a desire “*to hear the Word of God* ;”¶ and when St. Columba went as a missionary to heathen Scotland, his object was, we are told, “*to preach the Word of God*” to its benighted inhabitants.** So

* p. 326. † p. 327. ‡ p. 342. § p. 327. || pp. 328, 329 and Vol. II. Book iii. ¶ p. 240. ** p. 78.

that in fine, we need not wonder that John, the son of Sulgen above mentioned, in writing of the Irish, describes them, even so lately as the eleventh century, as being “a nation famous for the Word of God.”

There are others who address you oftener than I do, and who possess more influence with you, both clergymen and laymen; and they might have supplied you with information on this subject, had they chosen to do so; but unfortunately it is one in which these persons have generally shewed little interest: they to whom I allude have taken little pains to excite you to follow the holy and instructive examples of the ancient saints of Ireland, or to make you acquainted with the facts of the history of our ancient Church; but have rather perverted and caricatured the lives of those holy men, and the history of that ancient Church, by the false legends and absurd miracles they have interwoven with them; things which are only calculated to blind the eyes to what is really worthy of our imitation in such examples. But those teachers have concerned themselves little in supplying you in general with any useful information as to the most impor-



tant facts of ecclesiastical history ; this answers not their purpose. They have found more pleasure in directing your attention to topics and themes which appeal to the viler passions of corrupt human nature ; the remembrance of past wrongs, the contemplation of those at present existing, or supposed to exist, hatred, malice, and revenge. What a Christian is bound by his profession to forget, they studiously take care that you should remember. What is really worthy of a Christian to remember and imitate, they trouble themselves not much to bring to your mind.

Fellow-Irishmen, where is now the spirit of that holy Church of old, which caused Ireland to be exalted through righteousness, and high among the nations in the glorious eminence of Scriptural knowledge and holiness? Where is the true descendant of that Church, which sent forth her pupils through the world, well grounded in the knowledge of the Word of God, to be priests, bishops, and evangelists? Where is now the Church that exalts the Word of God, and raises its sacred banner high above the topmost tower of the sanctuary? Which is the Church that translates and prints, distributes

and circulates, teaches and preaches "*the Word of God?*" Or if Egbert and Agilbert, and Willibrord, and Sulgen, were in these days to come to Ireland, to study the sacred Scriptures, whither should they turn?—or with what Church would they be likely to hope for most encouragement and help in such an employment? Would they not find some teachers here who discourage and exclude, hate and abhor, denounce and curse, destroy and burn, the Sacred Volume of divine revelation; and others who cherish and encourage it as the ancient Church did, believing it to be the best and most necessary foundation of all education, and the knowledge and love of it a nation's brightest glory? Can you guess who these two classes of teachers are? And can you doubt to which of them those ancient saints, or the less eminent persons that accompanied them, would have been most likely to apply to for aid in the object which brought them to our land?

Let us handle the matter with all plainness of speech.—You meet a man on a Sunday with a Bible in his hand: what Church do you think he belongs to? I do not suppose you will have much trouble in concluding that he is no Romanist; and we just

as readily conclude, that they who shrink from the use of the book as dangerous and hurtful, and are afraid to place it in the hands of the people, are no followers of the ancient Church of Ireland, but are as opposed to her practices as they are to those of Christ and his apostles.

What Church has given to the people of Ireland the Word of God in their own tongue? And what Church has set her face against their reading in their native language its holy and comforting truths? Answer it men of Kingscourt, or Ballinascreen, or Abbeyfeale, or ye of Ventry, in the midst of whom it is my privilege to bring this work to its close*. Yes; the reply is to be found in the curses and threatenings, the persecution and injuries which so many of you have suffered, for daring to exercise the privilege of free Irish Christians, and for presuming to receive the gift put into your hand by the mercy of your God, and the instrumentality of His holy Church.

But, blessed be God, persecution has failed to produce its intended effect; and curses from Romish altars have proved but powerless engines to resist

* i.e. The second edition to which this address was originally prefixed.

the spread of divine truth, when met by patient forbearance on the part of the poor converts and Scripture readers ; men whose earnest prayer, I trust, is, that God would give their enemies a better spirit, and lead them to the acknowledgment of a more pure and holy faith. The light of Scriptural knowledge and truth has begun again to shine in places long lying in gross darkness and ignorance ; and in this very place where I now write, hundreds around have returned to the bosom of their ancient and now Scriptural Church, which their forefathers left in Queen Elizabeth's reign ; and they are now enjoying the privileges and ordinances of that Church, ministered to them *in their native tongue*, by one whom I am proud to be able to call an old and valued friend, the Rev. Thomas Moriarty, in whose house I pen these lines. That God may bless and extend the knowledge of His sacred Word among you, to the salvation and edification of your souls, is the heart's desire of your

Friend and servant in the Lord,

R. K.

Parsonage, Ventry, July 8, 1843.

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CHURCH HISTORY OF IRELAND.

BOOK I.

CHRISTIANITY IN ITS INFANCY AND GROWTH TO MATURITY.

CHAP. I.

OF THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANITY IN IRELAND.

WHEN we make inquiry concerning the origin and first beginnings of Christianity in Ireland, our thoughts turn naturally to St. Patrick, whom we have so often heard mentioned as the apostle of our island: and from the way in which he is spoken of by many, we might be inclined to think that he was the first person who came to preach the Gospel in this country. It is, however, a fact admitted generally by our historians,* Roman Catholic and Reformed, that there were many Christians here before he commenced his ministry; and the south of Ireland in particular is pointed to as having been distinguished above the other parts, for the number of converts to the

Before A. D.

431.

Origin of
Christianity
in Ireland.

* Harris's Ware, vol. i. p. 10. Lanigan's Eccl. Hist., vol. i. pp. 5, 14, &c.

A.D. 431.

Mission of
Palladius.

faith already to be found there, before the visit of this celebrated individual.

Writers on the subject are pretty generally agreed in fixing on A.D. 432 as the year in which St. Patrick came to commence his missionary labours in Ireland. In the preceding year, A.D. 431, according to the account commonly received, another eminent Christian teacher, named Palladius, had arrived here, as a missionary from Celestine, who was at that time Bishop of Rome. The ancient Chronicle of Prosper, in which his mission is first recorded, gives us the following brief account of it:—"Palladius is ordained by Pope Celestine, and sent as first bishop to the Scots, [*i.e.* the Irish,] believing in Christ."* This statement of Prosper is somewhat ambiguous, and leaves us uncertain whether he meant to say that Palladius was to be the *chief* bishop of the Irish, or that he was the *first in point of time* who exercised the episcopal office among them. However this be, Palladius had but little success, and it would seem as little perseverance, in his mission; and after having, as tradition informs us, baptized a few converts, and built three churches for their use, he met with such discouragement and opposition from the enemies of the Gospel, as caused him to withdraw from his work before a year had expired from the com-

His ill suc-
cess and de-
parture.

* Vide Prosperi Chronicon apud H. Canis. Lect. Ant., vol. i. p. 301. Ed. Basnage. Basso et Antiocho Coss.

mencement of it. The part of the country which was the scene of his brief labours is supposed to have been somewhere on the confines of Wicklow and Wexford. From that he withdrew to Britain, and died very soon after. The manner in which his mission to Ireland is spoken of in the words just quoted from Prosper's Chronicle, illustrates the fact already stated, that there were Christians in Ireland before those whom St. Patrick was the means of converting from Heathenism, for Palladius is spoken of as having been sent to those who were already believers in Christ.

A. D. 431.

Christians
in Ireland
before
A. D. 432, ac-
cording to
Prosper.

St. Patrick himself, in a tract called his "Confession," (which the most learned writers admit to be a genuine work of his,) makes use of language which implies that others had preached the Gospel before himself in some parts at least of Ireland: for in that tract, addressing the Irish people, he says to them, "I journeyed in every direction for your sakes, even to remote places to which no person had ever come to baptize or ordain clergymen:"* from which it is evident that some of the less remote parts had been visited by Christian missionaries already. Several earlier authors also have passages in their works which seem to express the same thing. Thus, Eusebius, a celebrated writer of Church History, who lived about A.D. 325, tells us that

The same
thing is ex-
pressed by
St. Patrick
himself.

and also by
Eusebius,
A.D. 325.

* Cap. 5. In "Sti. Patricii Opuscula," a Villanueva.

A. D. 431.
and St.
Chrysostom
A. D. 390.

some of the apostles crossed the ocean to the British Isles.* St. Chrysostom, also, writing a little later, about A.D. 390, informs us that there were in his time many persons in the British Isles familiar with the Holy Scriptures. His words are, "Although thou didst go unto the ocean and those *British Isles*, although thou didst sail unto the Euxine sea, although thou didst go to the southern quarters, thou shouldst hear *all men every where* discoursing matters out of the Scripture, with another voice indeed, but not with another faith, and with a different tongue, but with an according judgment."† In another passage of his works, the same writer, speaking in a similar strain of the spread of Christianity in the world, makes use of these words:—"For even the British Isles that lie away in the open ocean beyond the limits of our sea, have felt the power of the word. For there too churches and altars have been raised."‡ The introduction of the plural word "Isles" in these passages makes it appear that the remarks of St. Chrysostom are as applicable to Ireland as to England.

The heretic
Cælestius
an Irishman:

Further it is generally believed that the celebrated Cælestius, the favourite and most able

* In *Demonstratione Evangelica*, lib. iii. cap. 7.

† *Homil. de utilitate lectionis Scripturarum*; S. Chrysostomi Opera, Edit. Bened., tom. iii. p. 71. Savil., t. viii. p. 3. Morel., t. v. p. 581.

‡ Opp. Edit. Bened., tom i. p. 575. B. in Dem. quod Christus sit Deus.

disciple of the heretic Pelagius, was an Irishman.* A. D. 431.
 This is inferred from one or two passages of St. Jerome, in which he is understood to speak of Cælestius. In one of these passages he calls his adversary, a "most stupid person, fattened up with the pulse diet of the Scots,"† and in another he says of the same individual, that "he derived his origin from the Scottish people, whose country was in the neighbourhood of the Britons." It is sufficiently agreed that by "Scots" the Irish are here meant, as that was the name by which they were called in early times, especially from the fourth to the eleventh century; what is now called Scotland having never had that name until the eleventh century according to the judgment of Archbishop Ussher, but having been always before that known by other names, such as Albania in particular.‡ As Jerome does not actually mention the name of the person whom he censures, there exists a degree of doubt,§ as to whether Cælestius is intended; and some are of opinion that the words do not apply to him but to Pelagius himself. The former opinion

as is inferred from St. Jerome, A.D. 410.

The Irish anciently called Scots.

* Lanigan, vol. i. p. 16, and Ussher, as quoted by him there; and Mr. Petrie's Essay on the History and Antiquities of Tara Hill, in the Transactions of the R. I. Academy, vol. xviii. p. 47.

† Prolog. in Comm. Prop. Jeremiae, lib. i. et iii.; tom. iv. cc. 835, 925, Edit. Bened. Venet. 1766.

‡ Harris's Ware, vol. ii. p. 7.

§ Cave, Hist. Lit., vol. i. p. 384. Oxon. 1740. Tillemont, Mem. Ecc., tom. xiii. Art. 212, 216. Paris, 1710.

A. D. 431.

Gennadius's
notice of
Cælestius,
A.D. 495.He lived
A.D. 449.Early intro-
duction of
Christianity
likely from
the position
of Ireland :

however, as it is the most generally received, so it appears also the most satisfactory. Cælestius was of noble birth, and remarked for singular piety before he fell into his errors. For Gennadius, a writer of the fifth century informs us in a work published in A.D. 495, that "before he came to embrace the opinions of Pelagius, nay, when he was still a youth, he wrote from the monastery where he was, three letters to his parents in the shape of little pamphlets, that ought to be read by all who seek after God,"* so valuable was the matter contained in them. On this extract from Gennadius, Mr. Petrie makes the interesting observation, that "if Cælestius, while a youth, wrote letters from a foreign monastery to his parents at home, the conclusion is almost unavoidable, that his parents were able to read them. And as it appears from Marius Mercator, that Cælestius had been a disciple and hearer of Pelagius some twenty years before the disclosure of the Pelagian heresy in 405, the natural conclusion is, that letters were certainly known in Ireland, at least to some persons, in the beginning of the fourth century, and might possibly have been known a century earlier."

And further when we consider that it is almost certain that the Gospel was preached in Britain at the close of the first century, or as some, not

* See Petrie's Essay, already quoted, p. 17.

without reason, suppose, even before the death of St. Paul, we may well conceive that it must have been known in Ireland much about the same time. Wherever the march of conquest, or the track of commerce opened a road, the diffusive spirit of zeal and love which actuated the first Christians was sure to enter on the path, and seek to extend its blessed influence to the most distant lands. And if the power of the Roman arms, and the spread of their conquests, had rendered even remote Britain an object of interest to the world in the first ages of Christianity, the coasts of Ireland too, though less exposed from their situation to the hostilities of the invader, were, through the medium of trade, even better known to strangers than those of the neighbouring isle. The historian Tacitus, speaking of Ireland,* says, "The soil and climate, and the dispositions and habits of the people differ not much from Britain: the approaches to the country, and its ports, are better known, through commercial intercourse and merchantmen." In a country considered so accessible as this, we need not wonder that Christianity established its first footing at a period too early to be comprehended within the limits of any of our authentic historical records, especially when we know that the origin of the Christian Churches in Britain, Gaul, Spain, and even in many parts of Italy is involved in similar

A. D. 431.

as observed
upon by
Tacitus,
A.D. 97.

* Agricola, cap. 24.

A. D. 431. obscurity;* and we must only be content to remain in ignorance of the names of those who first professed and published in our island home the sacred name of our Lord and Master: looking forward rather to the time, when through the efficacy of His meritorious work of love, we shall be privileged to meet them face to face in the enjoyment of His presence and eternal glory.

CHAP. II.

OF THE HISTORIES OF ST. PATRICK WHICH ARE EXTANT, AND OF
THE REALITY OF HIS EXISTENCE.

A. D. 432. *Life of St. Patrick.* AND now, with regard to St. Patrick himself, the history of his life, and the facts recorded of him, contain many interesting particulars: indeed his name is so intimately connected with the infancy of Christianity in this country, that every thing which we can know for certain concerning him must be interesting to Irishmen. In the brief account which I am about to give of this great man, I shall select for the information of my readers, a few of those circumstances in his life which are most important for us to know, and which have the greatest appearance, as learned men have thought, of having been truly stated in those writings in which they are recorded.

* Lanigan's Ec. Hist. vol. i. p. 1.

And first I must observe that a great many lives of St. Patrick have been written at different times and by different authors. Some of those at present in existence were composed nearly seven hundred years ago, and some others of them perhaps hundreds of years before that. It is said that there were several written even by his own immediate disciples, which have been lost with a great many others: and when the monk Joceline set about writing his memoirs of the saint in the twelfth century, he found as he says, that sixty-six writers had engaged in the same work before himself.*

A. D. 432.

Ancient
Lives of St.
Patrick very
numerous.Sixty-six
composed
before A.D.
1185.

Of those lives of St. Patrick which have been preserved to our time, seven of the most important were published together in a very large volume, by an Irish Roman Catholic priest named Colgan, who lived in Flanders in the time of King Charles I. Of these seven, the *first* is written in the Irish language, and is called the Hymn of Fiech; it is so named from its being written in verse, and from its having been composed, as it is thought by many, by Fiech, who lived in the time of St. Patrick, and was bishop of Sletty in Leinster. It is certainly very ancient: Dr. O'Connor, one of the most learned Roman Catholic priests of the past generation, supposes it to have been written A.D. 540. The

The seven
published
by Colgan
noticed.The Hymn
of Fiech,
A.D. 540?

* Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*." S. Patricii Vita, 6ta, p. 106, c. 186.

A. D. 432.

St. Patrick's
Life by
Probus,
A.D. 950?

Joceline's,
A.D. 1185.

other six Lives in Colgan's collection, are less ancient. Of the *second*, *third*, and *fourth*, it is enough to say, in the words of the acute Dr. Lanigan, that they "are full of fables, and seem to have been copied either from each other, or from some common repository in which those stories had been collected," and "it would be idle to adduce the many proofs which they constantly exhibit of their having been patched up at a late period."* The *fifth* life attributed to an author named Probus, is regarded by Dr. Lanigan, and other learned Roman Catholics, as a very valuable work: it abounds like the rest with accounts of miracles and visions, by which the Saint is said to have been distinguished. The time when Probus wrote is uncertain, some making him so old as the seventh century, but the best judges placing him in the tenth.† The *sixth* life is that of Joceline, and it is much longer than any of the preceding; it is also perhaps the most celebrated, though Dr. Lanigan pronounces it, not without reason, to be the worst of all.‡ The writer was a Welchman, a monk of the abbey of Furness, who lived in the time of Henry II., and was brought over into Ireland by John de Courcey, the English invader and conqueror of the eastern part of Ulster. The *seventh* is longer still, and is supposed by Dr.

* Eccl. Hist., vol. i. p. 84. † ib. p. 82. ‡ ib. p. 88.

Lanigan to have been written in the tenth century: it contains the usual fables connected with the saint's history,* and is called the "Tripartite Life," because it is divided into three parts.

A. D. 432.

These last six lives of the saint, as given by Colgan, are written in Latin: a good deal of the same matter runs through them all; yet still they disagree extremely with each other in many of the principal events of his life recorded in them; and state so differently the year of his birth, the time he spent in study, the circumstances of his ordination, his labours, and age when he died, that it is difficult to tell which account is the true one, or whether any of them be so. Nevertheless, it is likely that many of the incidents recorded by these writers are in the main true; as indeed their statements are sometimes confirmed from other sources of information: it is probable that they collected whatever anecdotes or other accounts of the saint they could, some false, some true; but instead of exercising a sound judgment in endeavouring to find out what was really authentic and worth recording, and what should be rejected as improbable and false, they seem rather to have heaped together stories of every sort good and bad, that might help to swell their narratives, and answer the worthless end of gratifying the corrupt taste for the marvellous

General character of these compositions:

not entirely fabulous.

* ib. p. 87.

A.D. 432.

which is so common among men: thus these narratives became filled with the most senseless and improbable accounts of miracles and wonders said to have been performed by the saint. Joceline's life of him especially contains an amazing collection of such trash.

Portions of them are still read and circulated.

Even to this day do these ancient legends of fictitious miracles circulate among us to a considerable extent; badly translated portions of them supply the vulgar sort with sixpenny lives of St. Patrick, which may be had at the lowest book-stall; and there are not wanting volumes of more comely appearance, and published by authors of well-sounding names, in which the like fabulous wonders are served out to such of the better classes as care to read them.

Opinions of enlightened Romanists relative to St. Patrick's miracles:

But however readily these stories are believed among the more ignorant and credulous of the Roman Catholic body, their more learned and well-informed writers reject such stuff, and exhibit a better judgment with regard to it; thus, the very learned French Roman Catholic writer named Tillemont, having alluded to the numerous facts recorded of St. Patrick, makes these judicious observations on them:—"We readily believe that there are several of them true, but there are likewise several which are clearly false. So finding nothing certain here, we prefer contenting ourselves for his history with a writing

Tillemont's:

called his 'Confession,' which is believed to be his own, and which is truly worthy of him. We shall not find in it so large a number of facts, but I believe there will be enough of them to support the extreme veneration which the Church of Ireland has for him, and more effectually perhaps than this great collection of *miracles, improbable enough, to say no more of them,*" that we read of in his lives."* Bollandus, another of their learned writers, says in like manner of the lives of Irish saints, that "they have been patched together by most fabulous authors, and are none of them more ancient than the twelfth century."†

A.D. 432.

and that of Bollandus.

St. Patrick's "Confession," a genuine work of his.

The "Confession" of St. Patrick is however considered a genuine work of his, by Tillemont, Bollandus, Archbishop Ussher, and other men eminent for learning : it must be regarded therefore as the most authentic written memorial of the saint which we have, and as being, so far as it goes, the best help within our reach to the knowledge of his life and actions. We shall have occasion to refer to it again presently when treating of these points.

The doubt relative to St. Patrick's existence,

The false miracles which I have spoken of, have become so associated in the minds of many with St. Patrick's name, as to lead them to

* Tillemont, *Memoires*, vol. xvi. p. 455.

† Act. Sanct. ad 17 Martii., quoted by Ledwich. *Ant.*, p. 366. Ed. 1790. See also Lanigan's *Eccl. Hist.* vol. i. p. 49.

A.D. 432.

entertained
by Dr. Led-
wich in par-
ticular.

doubt whether any such person ever existed, or whether the miracles and the man be not alike imaginary, as always going both together, and appearing to rest on the same evidence. This doubt, to whatever extent it may have prevailed, has never been expressed by any of our deep or learned historical writers. Dr. Ledwich alone, a man of considerable information, who published a large book on the Antiquities of Ireland, some forty years since, has made himself singular by advocating strongly in that work the reasonableness of the doubt, or rather the unreasonableness of supposing that St. Patrick had any real existence before the ninth century. Dr. L. was able to point to only two individuals who had slightly expressed the same doubt before himself, one in 1618, the other in the year 1700; and his own reasons, though strongly urged, are not at best very forcible.

The mira-
cles rather
attest the
Saint's real
existence :

As to the miracles, they, however false, so far from proving his non-existence, strongly attest his existence: for miracles would never have been ascribed except to one who was already known in the traditions of the country, and it would have been more wonderful if they had not been attributed to him: for supposing him to have preached here and converted the natives of this isle, without even claiming to himself the power of working miracles, it is not in the na-

ture of things to suppose, that afterwards when his real actions were less fresh in men's minds, they could refrain from ascribing to him such powers. The more uninstructed and credulous especially, having a traditional knowledge of his wonderful exertions and their wonderful success, and being taught to remember his labours, and self-denial, and doctrine, and toilings for their sakes, with affectionate gratitude, would soon be inclined to enlarge upon what they had heard, and go on embellishing the truth with additions of the marvellous. It was accordingly many centuries after St. Patrick's death, that the great multitude of miracles connected with his name were invented and inserted in his life.

A.D. 432.

and were naturally ascribed to him.

Another argument against St. Patrick's existence has been derived from the circumstance that there is little or no mention of him in any writers who lived within the next three hundred years after his death. This objection would have more weight, if any native authors of those ages could be pointed to, who ought to have mentioned him and did not. Dr. O'Connor, having suggested several writings ascribed to that period, in which his name is mentioned, adds, "that even if all these authorities and manuscripts in which St. Patrick is expressly mentioned were destroyed, the laws of just cri-

The silence of historians no sufficient argument against St. Patrick's existence.

Dr. O'Connor's remark on it.

A.D. 432.

ticism forbid that after the lapse of so many ages, and the destruction of so many monasteries and libraries as formerly existed in Ireland before the Danish invasions, the *silence* alone of such authors as remain (supposing such silence) should be admitted in evidence to overthrow a national tradition, so universal in every part of Ireland, Scotland, and Mann, so immemorial, and so incorporated as that of St. Patrick is, with the traditional usages, names, anniversaries, monastic ruins, and popular manners of one hundred millions of Irishmen who have existed since his time.”*

The main facts of St. Patrick's history received by learned men in general.

Dr. Ledwich has some other arguments of less importance against the accounts of St. Patrick commonly received among us: they are not, however, such as require much sagacity or depth to reply to, and they cannot conveniently be dwelt upon in a work of such narrow limits as the present. Suffice it to conclude by saying that the most learned men of all parties, and authors in general, are sufficiently agreed in receiving as true the principal facts recorded in St. Patrick's life. Of these authors it is enough to mention Archbishop Ussher, our most famous and learned writer on the Antiquities of the British Churches, Bishop Stillingfleet, and Bishop Lloyd, who have handled the same subject in

* Columbanus ad Hibernos. No. 3. p. 59. Lond. 1810.

their writings, and Collier, the principal historian of the Church of England; to whom we may add the learned Mosheim, so well known among students of Church History for his useful work on that subject.

A.D. 432.

CHAP. III.

OF THE EARLY PART OF ST. PATRICK'S LIFE.

AND now that I have shewn that we may safely believe, with all our most learned writers, that there did indeed exist such a person as St. Patrick; I shall next mention what is most commonly received as true, concerning his life and actions. And first, as to the place of his birth, there is much difference of opinion about it, so that we cannot say for certain what place may claim most justly the honour of his nativity. Some are of opinion that he was born in Scotland, near the town of Kirkpatrick: others say in Cornwall, and many others in the north of France; at Boulogne or near it, according to some. This latter account, which makes him a native of France, is perhaps the most reasonable and satisfactory. In his confession he tells us he was born at a place called Benavern; the Hymn of Fiech says his birth place was Nemthur; but it is impossible, after the lapse of so many ages, to determine

A. D. 372,
or 373.
History of
St. Patrick.

Place of his
birth uncertain.

A. D. 372.

with certainty the position of the town or district so indicated.

His name
and parent-
age.

His name was originally Succath; but this has been generally forgotten in the Latin name of Patrick, by which he is commonly known. As to his parentage, his father is allowed to have been a Briton: and both the "Confession" of St. Patrick, and his biographer Joceline, agree in stating that he was a deacon named Calphurnius, and also that the grandfather of our saint was a priest named Potitus. It is clear, therefore, that he was born of Christian parents, and it also appears from his Confession, that the Gospel had been published and received to some extent in his own country: a sufficient evidence of this will be found in the next extract which we shall have to make from that work.

His father
and grand-
father both
persons in
holy orders.

His youth
and capti-
vity, A.D.
388, or 389.

The youth of St. Patrick was cast in troublous times: and his native land was then continually subject to invasion from various tribes of lawless adventurers, who were accustomed to overrun and pillage every district which could afford them hopes of spoil. Thus it came to pass, that in his sixteenth year he was taken captive by some Irish pirates, and sold as a slave to a Pagan prince in the north of Ireland. This trouble, which involved many of his countrymen with himself, he speaks of in his Confession as a just judgment on them for their sins.—"I was

brought into Ireland," he says, "in captivity, along with so many thousands of persons, according to what we deserved for our turning astray from God, and not keeping his commandments, and for being disobedient to our priests, who pointed out to us the way of salvation."* The part of Ulster in which he had now to endure the hardships of slavery appears to have been situated near Ballymena, in the county of Antrim, in the vicinity also of the mountain called Sliev Mis, in that quarter: he was there employed by his master, Milcho, in feeding his cattle, and had to pine away for years under the multiplied sufferings connected with such a state of bondage.

A. D. 388.

But "by sorrow of countenance the heart is made better," and affliction and heaviness, which are so often made effectual by grace to the conversion of sinners, had this blessed effect in the present instance. Patrick had as yet profited little by the instructions received in his childhood: he had come to Ireland, as he tells us, "ignorant of the true God," and "destitute of faith in him;" but during the chastening which he underwent in slavery, an all-important change was wrought in his heart, of which he speaks in terms of the most lively gratitude towards Him who was the author of it. "There it was," saith

The happy effect of his sufferings,

displayed in his conversion from sin to God.

* Confession, chap. i. sec. 1.

A.D. 388.

he, "that the Lord brought me to a sense of the unbelief of my heart, that I might even at a late season, call my sins to remembrance, and turn with all my heart to my Lord, who regarded my low estate, and taking pity on my youth and ignorance, watched over me before I knew him or had sense to discern between good and evil, and counselled me and comforted me, as a father doth a son."*

His great
earnestness
in religion
afterwards.

A little farther on, having again alluded to the great goodness of the Almighty towards him, he tells us with what diligence he was led to seek for higher measures of grace, and further advancement in spiritual life. "When I had come to Ireland," he says, "I was employed every day in feeding cattle, and frequently in the day I used to have recourse to prayer, and the love of God was thus growing stronger and stronger, and His fear and faith were increasing in me, so that in a single day I would give utterance to as many as an hundred prayers, and in the night almost as many. And I used to remain in the woods too, and on the mountain, and would rise for prayer before daylight, in the midst of snow and ice and rain, and felt no injury from it, nor was there any sloth in me, as I now see, because the spirit was fervent within me."†

And once again, in allusion to the same sub-

* Confession, chap. i. § 1.

† ib. ch. 2.

ject, he speaks thus—"I was not from my childhood a believer in the only God, but continued in death and in unbelief until I was severely chastened: and in truth I have been humbled by hunger and nakedness, and it was my lot to traverse Ireland every day sore against my will, until I was almost exhausted. But this proved rather a benefit to me, because by means of it I have been corrected by the Lord, and he has fitted me for being at this day what was once far from me, so that I should interest or concern myself about the salvation of others, when I used to have no such thoughts even for myself."*

A. D. 388.

His humble thankfulness for the benefits received from affliction.

The youth's slavery in Ireland at this time lasted for four, or, according to some authors, six or seven years: at the end of which period he was enabled to regain his liberty and return to his own country. He states in his Confession that he was directed by a vision which appeared to him, to the vessel, then lying in a distant port, which was to convey him to his home. After his return he had the misfortune to fall into captivity a second time: but this latter trial was of comparatively short duration, and after an absence of sixty days, his parents had the happiness of seeing him restored to them once more.

His escape from captivity, A. D. 392, or 395.

A. D. 397.

* *ib.* ch. ii.

CHAP. IV.

ST. PATRICK RESOLVES TO BECOME A MISSIONARY—HIS DIFFICULTIES—ENCOURAGEMENTS—PREPARATORY STUDIES—AND ORDINATION.

A. D. 397.
St. Patrick
resolves to
become a
Missionary
to the Irish.

AND now that he was possessed of liberty, and able to select an occupation for himself, St. Patrick shewed in his choice that love for the souls of others, and that anxiety for their welfare which is natural to those who have felt the power and influence of true religion in their own hearts: and retaining no resentment against those who had done him so many injuries, he was rather desirous to return them good for evil by making them acquainted with the knowledge of that Gospel which was his own chief delight and happiness. His heart thus became set on the conversion of the people among whom he had so long dwelt, and when the love of his Redeemer excited in him a missionary zeal and anxiety for propagating the faith, the circumstance of his having had opportunities of studying the language, habits, and feelings, of the people of Ireland, naturally directed his thoughts towards them, as the most suitable objects on whom to bestow his exertions.

His projects
opposed by
his friends.

His project however, when made known to his parents and friends, met with much opposition

from them, and their arguments, entreaties, gifts, and tears, were used on the one side to dissuade him from the missionary work; while on the other side those promises and precepts of Holy Scripture which encourage men to engage in it pressed on his mind with still greater force. A nightly vision also appeared to him, as he tells us, to combine its influence with theirs. After having mentioned his second captivity, he goes on to say, "I was again after a few years in Britain with my parents, who received me as their son, and solemnly entreated me that I should now at least, after so great tribulations as I had endured, go away from them no more. And there I saw in a vision of the night a person named Victricius coming as if from Ireland with innumerable letters; and he gave me one of them, and I read the beginning of the letter, running thus. 'The voice of the people of Ireland;' and as I was reading the commencement of the letter, I thought at that very moment that I heard the voice of those who were near the wood of Focluth, which is adjoining to the western sea, and they cried out thus, as it were with one voice, 'We entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk still among us;' and I was very much pricked to the heart, and could read no further, and so I awoke. Thanks be to God the Lord who after

A. D. 397.

His account
of the vision
which he
saw at this
time.

A. D. 397.

His stead-
fastness of
purpose in
reference to
his mission.

very many years hath granted to them according to their cry.”*

Again he says, “Whence was it that I was enabled afterwards to know and value so great and healthful a gift of God, in such a way as to give up home and parents and the many offers that were made to me with weeping and tears; and I incurred displeasure there from some of my seniors, but under the guidance of God I in no wise consented or gave in to them, (yet not I, but the grace of God which prevailed in me;) and I withstood all, in order that I might come to preach the Gospel to the people of Ireland, and bear with ill-treatment from the unbelieving, so that I should hear reproaches cast on my journey, and that I should have to endure persecution even to bonds, giving up myself and all my advantages for the sake of others’ good.”† And again he tells us,‡ that “many were for hindering this mission, and some among them were speaking and saying behind my back, ‘Why does he expose himself to peril among enemies who know not God?’” “Now, therefore,” he adds, “I have in my simple way intimated to my brethren and fellow-servants, why it is that I have preached and preach still for the confirmation of your faith. Would to God that you too

* Confession, chap. iii.

† *ib.* chap. iv.‡ *ib.* chap. v.

may aim at still nobler objects, and succeed in them still more happily: this shall be my glory, since a wise son is the glory of his father." Thus may we even now hear a voice coming as it were from the tomb of St. Patrick, to stimulate and inspire the missionary zeal of Irish Christians for the propagation of the Gospel throughout the world.

A. D. 397.

But to return to himself, what most influenced his mind and filled him with ardour for the work before him, was the language of Holy Scripture in reference to it: and we may easily see, from the number of texts quoted by him on this subject, that he was well read in the Bible, and knew how to apply it to the regulation of his life. I must venture on a rather long extract on this subject; for though to some it may appear tedious, yet I cannot withhold what I know will interest some of those who will read my little book in the wilds of Kerry, or Tyrone, or in other parts of our country where the Irish Bible is read; and where some may be found, I trust, who will love St. Patrick more when they find what a good scholar he was in the Holy word of God. "Therefore," says he, "it becomes us to fish diligently and well, as the Lord tells us when he saith, '*Come after me, I will make you to become fishers of men*;'*

The precepts and promises of Holy Scripture, his chief motive for entering upon the Irish mission.

* St. Matt. iv. 19.

A. D. 397.

and again he saith in the prophets, '*Lo I send many fishers and hunters, saith the Lord, &c.*'* Wherefore we ought to stretch our nets carefully, that a plentiful assemblage and multitude may be caught for God, and there may be clergymen every where to baptize and exhort the poor and needy people; as the Lord saith in the gospel where he commands and tells us,—'*Go ye therefore to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world;*'† and again he saith, '*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*'‡ '*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a testimony unto all nations, and then shall the end come;*'§ and again the prophet of the Lord in his preaching saith.—'*And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams. And also upon my*

* Jerem. xvi. 16.

† S. Mark, xvi. 15-16.

† S. Matt. xxviii. 19-20.

§ S. Matt. xxiv. 14.

*servants and my handmaids will I pour out of my Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy ;** and Osee saith, “ *I will call her my people which was not my people, and have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy, and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, ‘ye are not my people,’ there shall they be called the children of the living God*”† I shall not say any thing here of the manner in which these texts are applied, but quote them only to shew the writer’s knowledge of the letter of the Scripture, and willingness to be influenced by it in his life and practice.

A. D. 397.

His zeal and anxiety to be engaged in preaching the Gospel to the Heathen being sufficient to overcome all hinderances, he appears to have applied himself with much earnestness to fit his mind for the great object he had in view; and as the troubles of his younger days had deprived him of the opportunities of education which others enjoyed, he felt that it was the more needful for him afterwards to apply himself with diligence and devotedness to such studies as might be a useful preparation for the solemn undertaking which he had in view: for he did not think that he should be the better preacher for ignorance,

His studies
preparatory
to the Irish
mission,
A.D. 402?

* Joel, ii. 28.

† Hosea, i. 10, and ii. 23.

A. D. 402.
He goes to
read the
Holy Scrip-
tures, &c.,
with Ger-
manus,
bishop of
Auxerre.

His visit to
St. Martin
of Tours,

and to the
monks of
Lerins.

A. D. 432. St.
Patrick's
consecration
involved in
much obscu-
rity;

nor did he desire to serve God with that which cost him nought. He therefore betook himself, as we are informed by his biographers, to the celebrated Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, in France, and placing himself under his care and direction, he "remained with him a considerable time, eagerly applying his mind to the attainment of wisdom, and the learning of the Holy Scriptures."* We are also told that he spent some time with the famous St. Martin, bishop of Tours, engaged in the same way, and profiting by his Christian instructions:† and having been by these prelates admitted to the holy orders of deacon and priest, he travelled (by the advice, it appears, of St. Germanus) to the south of France, and taking up his abode in the island of Lerins in the Tuscan Sea, remained there for some time with the monks of a celebrated collegiate institution in that place, prosecuting his studies, and growing, as we may well suppose, in piety and Christian experience.‡

It is uncertain by whom St. Patrick was ordained a bishop: some Roman Catholic historians, to be sure, would have us to believe that Pope Celestine appointed him to that

* S. Patricii Vita 2da, cap. xxii., apud Colgan. Trias Th. p. 13; also, "Hymn of Fiech," stanza 6, &c.

† Colgan's Trias, Vita, 5ta., lib. i. cap. 14.

‡ Lanigan's Eccl. Hist., vol. i. chap. 4. p. 169.

holy office, and sent him with a commission from himself to preach to the Irish. One of the best, however, of those historians, Dr. Lanigan, admits that it cannot be certainly told what bishop consecrated the saint to the episcopal office; yet he is of opinion that he came here with the authority and sanction of Pope Celestine, somehow or other; "he ought to have done so, therefore, he must have done it," seems the chief argument for this notion.* But had such been the case, Prosper, the intimate friend of Celestine, would surely have mentioned it in his Chronicle, published several years after, as he did the trifling attempt of Palladius; he does not, however, once make mention of St. Patrick's name, but is altogether silent concerning him.

A. D. 432.

but is admitted not to have been from Rome, by Dr. Lanigan;

which is confirmed by Prosper's silence,

A. D. 455.

And so is Platina, a very valuable and well-informed author of the Roman Church, who wrote the Lives of the Popes, down to Sixtus IV., A.D. 1471. He tells of Palladius, but has not a word about St. Patrick in his Life of Pope Celestine: none could have had more free access than he had to documents connected with the history of the Roman Church, and surely if he could have found any that would have proved Celestine to have been the author of so great a

and by Platina's in like manner.

* *ib.*, pp. 191, 198.

A.D. 432.

Ussher's
opinion that
St. Patrick
was com-
missioned
by Pope Ce-
lestine not
to be fol-
lowed.

work as the conversion of Ireland, he would not have failed to mention it.

Archbishop Ussher was indeed of opinion that St. Patrick had a commission from Rome ; but since the days of this eminently learned man, the question has been further sifted, and the additional light thus thrown upon it, has tended to make it appear highly probable, or almost certain, that St. Patrick never was at Rome, and that he never received from Rome any commission whatsoever.*

Notice of
St. Patrick's
mission in
the Cotton
MS.

A very ancient manuscript, preserved in England, in the Cotton Library, which Dr. O'Connor considers to have been written in the ninth century, (and Ussher and other learned men supposed to be some centuries older still,) mentions that the "Bishops Germanus and Lupus nurtured him in sacred literature, and ordained him and made him the chief bishop of their school among the British and Irish." This some would take for a sufficient evidence that it was from Germanus and Lupus that St. Patrick received his ordination to the episcopal office ; but there is no use in asserting strongly what cannot be demonstrated forcibly, nor depended on as unquestionably true ; and it becomes us rather to speak modestly of things which have puzzled the most

its meaning
obscure.

* See "Case of the Church of Ireland stated by Declan," (Mr. Phelan.)

learned inquirers into these matters. Since then they have been unable satisfactorily to settle the question, and since it is after all of little moment, we need not here dwell on it, but content ourselves with this general conclusion, that it appears in a very high degree of probability that St. Patrick never was in Rome, nor received from Rome any suggestion of his undertaking, but was appointed and consecrated a bishop for the Irish mission by some bishop or bishops of the Church of France.

A.D. 432.

The safest conclusion to be drawn in this case.

CHAP. V.

ST. PATRICK'S MISSIONARY LABOURS AND DEATH.

Patrick had returned from slavery in Ireland in his twenty-third year: it was not until very long after that he fulfilled his desire of coming as a missionary to preach the Gospel to our countrymen; for he is said to have been advanced in years when he commenced his labours here, some accounts making him sixty years old at that period of his life, and stating that he lived for sixty years more working here in the ministry; while others again make his age forty-five at the beginning of his mission, and seventy-eight at the time of his death;* leaving thus

A.D. 432.
Chronology of St. Patrick's history uncertain.

* Vid. Lanigan's. Ec. Hist. vol. i. pp. 129, 135, 363.

A.D. 432.

thirty-three years to be spent in his Irish labours: but this is one of those particulars concerning which, amid the great variety of differing opinions, I shall not take on me to say any thing for certain. It does not appear whether his delaying so long as he did to revisit this country, arose from his considering so long a course of preparation necessary, or from his ardour for the project having relaxed, and returning afterwards with increased vigour.

He arrives
at the scene
of his future
missionary
labours.

In A.D. 432, as has been already observed, St. Patrick came to preach to the Irish; bringing with him, as we are told, many companions, whose piety and learning made them useful assistants in his work. He first landed on the coast of Leinster; (in Wicklow, according to some writers;) but meeting here with much opposition from the enmity of the Pagans, considered it best to withdraw for a time from that part of the island, and turn his attention to some other quarter. And, therefore, having embarked again in the same vessel which brought him to Ireland, he came by sea to the northern province where he had formerly been a captive; and landed again in the county of Down, (in the bay of Dundrum, or near Strangford as Dr. Lanigan thinks,) where he began to preach with great success, and gained numerous converts to the faith which he propagated. One of the first

of these was Dichu, prince of the territory where he landed, who after his conversion showed his zeal for the Christian cause, by taking care to have a church provided there for the use of the converts in that quarter. This church is said to have been called Patrick's barn, and was possibly nothing more than a barn of Dichu's, which was given by him to be applied to the purposes of religious worship. It afterwards was called Sabhall or Saul.* St. Patrick next visited Milcho, his former master, and strove to effect his conversion; but his pious endeavours proved in this case unsuccessful, and he returned again to Down.

A. D. 432.

His ill success with Milcho.

Next year, A.D. 433, it appears that he preached at Easter, before Leogaire, the supreme monarch of Ireland, at Tarah in Meath, where the national convention or parliament was then assembled: and the power with which he urged upon them the truths of the Gospel was such, that according to some accounts, the king himself became a convert to Christianity, and great multitudes of his subjects soon followed his example. The story of the monarch's conversion, however, is contradicted by some of the old authorities, and seems untrue: but at all events he did not prohibit the preaching of the Gospel in his dominions.† After St. Patrick had preached through the territory

A. D. 433.

St. Patrick preaches at Tarah before the king, &c.

* Lanigan's Ec. Hist. vol. i. p. 212.

† ib. 232.

A. D. 433.
He visits
Connaught,
A. D. 435.

of Meath, Connaught seems next to have claimed his attention, and in it he met with signal success, for thousands heard the Word with gladness, and embraced the faith; and especially, we are told, in that district whose inhabitants he had formerly seen in a vision, beseeching him to come and labour among them.

and Leinster
A. D. 442
and 443.

Returning through Ulster and Meath, St. Patrick next visited Leinster, and carried on there his missionary work, with similar success, the princes of the country embracing his doctrines with readiness, and encouraging the spread of them amongst their subjects. After having spent some time in these parts, he began to think of visiting Munster. The reason why he left this part of Ireland for the last was probably, because the number of Christians already existing in the south made his presence less necessary there than in other places.

St. Patrick
visited
Cashel,
A. D. 445 ?

At length, however, he bent his steps towards this quarter, and came to Cashel, where the royal residence of Munster was then situated. Ængus, prince of the country, soon became a convert, and co-operated with St. Patrick in arranging and settling the state of the Church in his kingdom. Tradition informs us that "King Ængus and Patrick did ordain that in the city and see of St. Ailbe (i. e. Emly) should always be the

The legend
of Ailbe,
Declan,
Kiaran, and
Ibar.

archbishopric of the whole province of Munster ;”* and we are told upon like authority that St. Patrick consecrated to the episcopal office, Ailbe, Declan, Kiaran, and Ibar, four holy men who had been preaching in Munster before he came there. These accounts are, however, very uncertain, and not to be depended upon ; but appear full of contradictions and chronological difficulties, and are at variance with the best records of that age which remain to our time.

A. D. 445.

From Munster, after ending his labours there, St. Patrick went to the abbey of Saul in Down : here, in the place where success first crowned his labours, he brought them to a close ; and after having founded in A.D. 455 the cathedral church of Armagh, spent his latter days in retirement. He died on the 17th of March, in consequence of which that day has been observed for his commemoration from time immemorial ; but the year of his death is uncertain : according to the account that has been most generally received, it was A.D. 492. He was buried in Down.

He returns
from Mun-
ster to
Down,
A. D. 452 ?

A. D. 455 ?

His death
A. D. 492.

The particular circumstances of his life here mentioned are gathered from his biographers : they are not recorded in his “Confession,” which makes only general allusions to his ministerial labours. This latter treatise was written by him when advanced in life, and after his successful

Account of
his Confes-
sion : and
evidence of
its having
been written
late in his
life.

* Colgan's *Trias*, p. 200. Lanigan, vol. i. p. 283.

A. D. 492.

Its Latin
diction cor-
rupt and
obscure.

exertions for the spread of the Gospel: it was addressed to the people of Ireland, and was designed to record the goodness of Almighty God toward himself and those among whom he had laboured, and also to give a true account of the motives which influenced him in his toils, and supported him in his many trials and dangers. He would have written this work sooner, he says, but for his ignorance of composition, caused by troubles and captivity among foreigners in his youth. "I thought of writing this long since," he says, "but have hesitated to this present time; for I was in dread lest I should incur censure from men, because I have not had the same opportunities of reading with others, who have had the best instructions in sacred literature, and have never been obliged to interrupt their studies, but have been always advancing further toward perfection: for my language and expressions have had to give place to a foreign language." And indeed, as Tillemont observes,* "it must be admitted that the Latin in his Confession is very bad, so as to make it difficult to catch the sense in many parts, independently of mistakes made by transcribers:" this perhaps is one reason why so interesting a document has never been translated for the use of general readers.†

* *Memoires*, vol. xvi. p. 464.

† There is a translation of it in Sir William Betham's "*Irish Anti-*

That the Confession was written in his latter days and after the conversion of Ireland, is evident from different passages in it; thus he says, (in chap. iv.,) "Therefore must I boldly proclaim every where the name of God, and even after my death leave the knowledge of it to my brethren and sons whom I have baptized in the Lord, so many thousands of persons as they are; though I was not worthy or deserving that the Lord should grant such favour as this to his servant; or that he should, after all my troubles of such magnitude, after my captivity, after the many years spent with that people, bestow upon me such abundant grace, as in bygone days of youth I never did expect nor think of." And in another place he says that, "the Irish who had never before had the knowledge of God among them, and who worshipped nothing but unclean idols up to that time, had become of late the Lord's people and God's children."

A. D. 492.
Internal
proofs of
the time at
which it was
written.

The writer called by some Nennius, who is supposed to have written in A.D. 858, tells us that St. Patrick founded here three hundred and sixty-five churches, and ordained three hundred and sixty-five bishops, and three thousand presbyters; and that in Connaught alone he converted twelve thousand persons to the faith of

Notice of
St. Patrick's
labours in
Nennius,
A. D. 858?

quarian Researches," Part ii. but that work is not accessible to ordinary readers.

A. D. 492.

Christ. This is probably one of those exaggerated representations of real facts, which have led some people to doubt whether any such person as the saint ever existed. It does however appear, that before the alterations which were made in the state of the Irish Church in the twelfth century, by the party attached to the interests of the Roman bishop, who then first began to have much power in the country, or to exercise settled and admitted authority among us,—it does appear that there was before that period a far larger number of bishoprics than there is at present in Ireland; so many, perhaps, as some hundreds. But we shall have occasion to allude to this circumstance again, in connection with other features of our Church History, and so it need not be dwelt upon here.

Summary
of the con-
tents of St.
Patrick's
Confession.

We may wind up our account of St. Patrick's life with the following extract from his Confession, which forms the closing sentence of that work, and may be looked on as a brief summary of the entire:—"I protest in truth," he says, "and can rejoice in the thought before God and his holy angels, that I never had any motive, save the Gospel and its promises, for ever returning to that people from among whom I had escaped. And I beg of all that believe in God and seek and fear Him, whoever of them may be pleased to examine or read this letter, which I

Patrick, poor sinful and ignorant creature as I am, have written in Ireland, that no one will ever say that my ignorance is to have the credit of it, if I have effected or proved any little matter according to the purpose of God; but believe and be assured for certain that it was God who has done it. And this is my confession before I shall die." A. D. 492.

Such was the spirit by which this eminent missionary was characterised, such the motives which influenced him. A lively looking forward by faith to the hope of heavenly blessedness revealed in the promises of the Gospel, and an earnest humble desire to render to Almighty God all the glory of that great work of the conversion of Ireland, of which he had been made the honoured instrument. The Saint's religious disposition.

CHAP VI.

ST. PATRICK'S RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.

BUT it will not do for us to bid farewell to St. Patrick until we have heard a little about the doctrines which he taught the people: a little it must be, for we have already remained with him so long as makes it needful for us to hasten on rapidly to other matters. With regard to this subject, it will be sufficient for us to consider St. Patrick's doctrines considered.

A. D. 492.

Works in
which they
are to be
sought for.

briefly what is most interesting in connection with it ; that is, what our apostle, as he is called, taught in reference to those subjects which are immediately connected with the peculiar tenets of the modern Church of Rome. Now the writings of St. Patrick which have come down to us, and are acknowledged genuine, are not many ; the principal of them are, his " Confession," already noticed ; a letter of his to Coroticus, a Pagan king, or rather to his Christian subjects, relating to the cruel and persecuting conduct of this tyrant towards them ; and canons supposed to have been agreed to at a synod held by him in Ireland, in conjunction with two other eminent men, Auxilius and Isserninus.

Of St. Patrick's Irish Hymn, commonly called his Armour, or Breast-plate.

There is also extant a very remarkable Irish Hymn, said to have been composed by the saint on the occasion of his going to Tarah to preach before the king and states of Ireland. It is called *St. Patrick's Armour*, because it is a kind of prayer intended for a defence against the plots that beset his path to Tarah, through the malice of his Pagan foes ; and it is supposed by the learned to be the oldest undoubted monument of the Irish language in existence. It commences with a profession of faith in the Trinity and Unity of God, and in the Incarnation of Christ, in his Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension, and future Coming to Judgment. Then after praying

for all the powers of nature and grace to be between the author and harm on the eventful day of his preaching at Tarah, it proceeds in the following strain: "At Temur [i.e. Tarah,] to-day may the strength of God pilot me, may the power of God preserve me, may the wisdom of God instruct me, may the eye of God view me, may the ear of God hear me, may the word of God render me eloquent, may the hand of God protect me, may the way of God direct me, may the shield of God defend me, may the host of God guard me against the snares of demons, the temptations of vices, the inclinations of the mind, against every man who meditates evil to me, far or near, alone or in company." Then comes another passage of less interest to our readers, after which this curious piece ends with the following prayers: "Christ [be] with me, Christ before me, Christ after me, Christ in me, Christ under me, Christ over me, Christ at my right, Christ at my left, Christ at this side, Christ at that side, Christ at my back—Christ be in the heart of each person whom I speak to, Christ in the mouth of each person who speaks to me, Christ in each eye which sees me, Christ in each ear which hears me. At Temur to-day I invoke the mighty power of the Trinity. I believe in the Trinity under the unity of the God of the elements. Salvation is the Lord's, salvation is the Lord's, sal-

A. D. 492.

Extracts
from this
Hymn.

A. D. 492. vation is Christ's. May thy salvation, O Lord, be always with us." We have inserted nearly half of this remarkable document, as few of our readers may have an opportunity of seeing the work from which these extracts are made."*

St. Patrick's writings, not Romish in their tendency.

The works of St. Patrick here noticed, and the one or two others of less note which are commonly attributed to him, are as remote as possible from any controversial subjects, and therefore they contain less information than we might desire, suited to our present inquiry: but as far as they do incidentally supply us with any light or evidence bearing on the question, their testimony is quite satisfactory for those who argue for the purity of the doctrines of the ancient Church against the corruptions introduced by the Romish party. We must not indeed expect to find St. Patrick preaching against those modern Romish errors which were not heard of in his time; it is enough that we hear him stating the truth, and sometimes unintentionally and incidentally, as it were, stating it in such a way as to leave no room for the admission of those later inventions; more than this it would be unreasonable to look for in his writings.

* Essay on the History and Antiquities of Tarah Hill. By George Petrie, Esq., R.H.A., M.B.I.A., page 55—68. In the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, vol. xviii.

Now in the works which are ascribed to him as above mentioned, the first point of importance worthy to be noted is, that the Holy Scriptures are in them constantly alleged as the ground and foundation of Christian doctrine. The written Word alone is used by the Apostle of Ireland, as his authority for establishing or confirming all his statements; and there is no reference made to the voice of tradition or of the Church, even as far as they might lawfully be used, in proof of any of his assertions; while the passages of the Bible referred to are exceedingly numerous, as in the striking instance quoted already from his Confession, in reference to missionary exertions. (See page 25.)

A. D. 492.
The Holy Scriptures the source and foundation of his belief.

And Joceline, the Romish writer of St. Patrick's life, already mentioned, says that he used to read the Bible to the people, and explain it to them for days and nights together.* And in a work ascribed to the Saint (*de abusioibus sæculi*) the virtuous female is spoken of as refreshing her soul with constant meditations on the Scriptures, and discourses about their contents.

Joceline's mention of his use of the Scriptures.

As for the Romish doctrine of merits, there is nothing to be found in St. Patrick's writings to countenance or support it, or indeed to show that such a doctrine was known to him. His works, on the contrary, breathe the most humble spirit

The Romish doctrine of merits not countenanced in St. Patrick's writings.

* *Sti Patricki Vita*, cap. 94; Colgan's *Trias*, p. 87.

A. D. 492.

of distrust in any worthiness of man, or claims on his part to divine favour. The free grace of God alone is alleged as sufficient for man's salvation; and to Him alone is attributed all the good that is wrought in us. The following passages are sufficient illustrations of this statement:—
 "I was as a stone which lies in the deep mire, and He who is mighty came and in His mercy raised me out of it: He hath exalted me and placed me on the top of the wall."*—"What shall I say or what shall I promise to the Lord? For I possess no strength but what He hath given me;" and, "from God have I received to be what I am."

St. Patrick
no preacher
of the ne-
cessity of
clerical cel-
ibacy.

St. Patrick had no idea that it was necessary for all clergymen to be unmarried; why should he, when his own father and grandfather were men in holy orders? One of the canons of his synod is clear enough as to this point, in which a penalty is enacted against the *wife* of any clergyman, from the highest to the lowest order of the ministry, who should venture out of doors without having her head veiled. Had these cases been contrary to any general law of the Irish Church then existing, which forbade clergymen to marry, we can hardly suppose but that some notice would have been taken of the circumstance.

Invocation
of saints not
used by St.
Patrick.

There is no trace of the invocation of saints in St. Patrick's writings, unless we adopt the Romish

* Vid. Psalm xl. 2.

interpretation of an obscure passage in his Confession ; in which place, whatever be its meaning, the writer expressly attributes to Christ his Redeemer, the aid which he felt suddenly imparted to him. As this is the most striking instance in which it has been attempted to make St. Patrick appear to be an upholder of anti-scriptural errors in doctrine and practice, and as the evidence alleged in proof of his leaning to those errors, is derived from a work which has the best character for genuineness among the writings ascribed to him, it may be worth while to dwell a little on the question, with a view to exposing more fully the fallacies of those teachers who would represent our Saint as an authority in favour of their own practice of addressing prayers to departed spirits : and it will easily appear how little sanction for such a practice can be found in the passage referred to by these persons.

A. D. 492.

The attempt to prove that he did use it, not a successful one,

It was on his return from his first captivity in Ireland, that the circumstances in question occurred. One night, he says, as he lay asleep, Satan attacked him sorely with temptation, and appeared to fall on him like a stone of great weight, so as to render him quite powerless : just then he tells us, "I know not how it was suggested to me to call on Helias : and at this moment I saw the sun rise in the heaven, and as I was calling Helias, Helias, with all my might, to the splen-

The case referred to stated.

A. D. 492.

Explanation
of the pas-
sage in his
Confession.
Whether
St. Patrick
prayed to
the prophet
Elijah?

and evi-
dence on the
subject in
Colgan's
Lives.

dour of the sun fell on me, and immediately removed all my heaviness. And *I believe that I was assisted by Christ my Lord*, and that His Spirit was at that very time crying out in my behalf." This passage is so very obscure that it is difficult to ascertain the writer's meaning. Mr. Mason, in his "Religion of the ancient Irish Saints," expresses it as his opinion, that by "*Helias*," the Lord Himself is intended, and that they who look on it as an instance of adoration offered to saints, "make the same mistake concerning St. Patrick's exclamation or appeal, that the Jews did of our Lord's upon the cross—'*Behold! he calleth Elias*.'" A little examination of the subject will show, that this interpretation of Mr. Mason's, is so far from being at all a far-fetched or improbable one, that it is the most natural and ancient mode of explaining the passage. Let us look into Colgan's Lives of St. Patrick, and see what account they give of the circumstance. 1st, then: the Hymn of Fiech omits it altogether. 2. The Second Life says, that when "there fell on him a heavy stone, he prayed *Eli* to remove it from him."* 3. The Third Life says, "Then, Patrick twice invoked the aid of *Eli*, and *Eli* came and rescued him."† 4. The Fourth Life

* Colgan's Trias, p. p. 13, 17. The second Life is given in Latin, with parts in Irish: the passage quoted here is in this latter language. Vit. 2nda. cap. xx.

† Vita 3ta. cap. xvii. Colgan, p. 22.

merely gives the account in St. Patrick's own words, quoting them from his Confession as given above.* 5. But the Fifth Life, which Dr. Lanigan regards as one of the most valuable, is more explicit. It tells us, that Satan's attack on the Saint was caused by revenge, on account of Patrick's having been the means, during the day previous, of converting some persons from the power of sin unto God; and it then gives this account of St. Patrick's prayer on the occasion: "*When he had thrice invoked Christ, the true Sun*, immediately the Sun arose upon him, and its light scattered all the mists of darkness, and his strength was restored, and he feared no more the terrors of devils, nor their evil designs."†—6 and 7. Joceline,‡ and the Seventh Life,|| interpret the passage in the Confession so as to make it refer to the prophet Elias, and they say that it was he who came to St. Patrick. From all which we may see, that the more ancient biographers of the Saint never understood the prophet Elias to have been the object of his adoration, but only Christ the Lord, and it was left for later wits, for "those two compilations of all stories, viz., Joceline's and the Tripartite,"(as Dr. Lanigan§ design-

A. D. 492.

Probus's account of the transaction.

Conclusion of the subject.

* Vita 4ta. cap. xxiv. Colgan, p. 38.

† Vita 5ta. lib. i. cap. viii.

‡ Cap. xix. Colgan's Trias, p. 70.

|| Pars i. cap. xxviii. Colgan, p. 121.

§ Ec. Hist. vol. i. p. 192.

A. D. 492.

Purgatory
not a doc-
trine of St.
Patrick's;

nates the Sixth and Seventh Lives,) to discover and tell to the world, that St. Patrick really prayed to the prophet Elijah. And yet Dr. Lannigan coolly expresses his opinion that this passage in St. Patrick's life, "will be admitted to be a sufficient proof, that St. Patrick considered the invocation of saints as commendable and necessary!"* But after what has been said, we have little fear that any of our readers will be misled by his authority on this point.†

As for purgatory, not only is there no mention of it in St. Patrick's writings, but the possibility of its existence is altogether excluded in a work ascribed to him and enumerated among his writings by several ancient authors, and given with his other works in a volume of them published

* Ec. Hist. Vol. 1. p. 155. not 55.

† From the way in which the sun-rising is mentioned in this anecdote, one would almost be led to think that there must be some allusion to the meaning of the word "Helios," in Greek, which is the common name of the sun in that language. It seems clear that the sun-rising is mentioned as an emblematic circumstance illustrative of the power of Christ coming to his servant's aid. Probus evidently took it so in the passage above quoted from the fifth Life. The writer perhaps had in his mind the words of the prophet Malachi, ch. iv. 2. "*Unto you that ear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.*" It was about the time of St. Patrick or in the age immediately preceding, that the first germs of the abuse we are speaking of appeared. But the most eminent fathers of the Church condemned the error. St. Augustine saith of Christ, "He is the priest who have been partakers of flesh, doth make intercession for us." And Epiphanius saith,—"*Neither Elias, nor John, nor Thecla, nor any of the saints, is to be adored.*" (Ussher's Answer to a Jesuit, chap. ix.) Augustine and Epiphanius both lived a little before St. Patrick's time.

not long since, by a learned Romanist, Signor Villaneuva. The tract alluded to is entitled "The Three Habitations," or abodes of spirits; these three abodes are enumerated to be, heaven, earth, and hell; and there is not the least mention of purgatory, nor any allusion to it. Dr. Lanigan, the Roman Catholic Church historian, attempts to account for this by saying,* that St. Patrick had no occasion to mention purgatory in this tract, as it is only on *permanent* habitations; but this frivolous remark is easily answered by observing, that in that case the present world, as well as purgatory, would have been omitted. Mr. Brennan, another of our Romish historians, suggests that in the tract we are speaking of, purgatory may perhaps be included under "heaven;" the souls there being in a state of happiness. This is, to say the least of it, an unusually pleasant notion of purgatory, and one that, if generally received, might save some money to many of our poor countrymen, and dissipate too some of their purgatorial societies: it will hardly, however, strike our Roman Catholic friends as a very satisfactory way of meeting the troublesome silence of the tract in question.

And as St. Patrick was quite ignorant of such a place as purgatory, so neither did he know any

A.D. 492.

Evidence of the tract on "The Three Habitations."

Dr. Lanigan's explanation of the passage:

and Mr. Brennan's.

No praying of souls out of purgatory

* Eccl. Hist. vol. iii. p. 331.

A. D. 492.
used by St.
Patrick.

Explanation
of a canon
attributed to
him.

"Birth-
days" of the
old Saints,
explained.

Remission
of sins after

thing of the prayers for the dead connected with it in the Romish system. Nevertheless, some there are who would collect that he was a favourer of both, from the words of the following canon of the second council supposed to have been held by him in Ireland. "Of oblation for the dead." "Hear the apostle saying, 'there is a sin unto death, I do not say that any shall pray for it;' and our Lord saith, 'Give not that which is holy unto dogs;' for he who in his lifetime will not deserve to receive the sacrifice, how can it help him after his death." Now to understand and explain this canon, it will be necessary to observe that it was usual in the early Church to make offerings of praise and thanksgiving to God annually for those who had suffered martyrdom, and who, having been faithful unto death, were believed to have inherited a crown of life. The day of their death was called their birth-day, as being the day of their entrance on a new life of everlasting happiness. Thus Tertullian (who wrote about A.D. 200) says,* "Once a year we make offerings for the deceased, for their birth-days;" and Eusebius (A.D. 325) mentions the celebration with joy and gladness of Polycarp's birth-day of martyrdom.† St. Polycarp suffered in the first century.

But further, it has been the opinion of many

* De Coron. Militis. cap. iii. p. 289. Paris, 1608.

† Ec. Hist. Lib. iv. cap. xv. p. 171. Camb. 1720.

pious and learned persons in all ages of the Church, that the dead who have died in the Lord, and who rest in peace from their labours, have not yet attained (see Rev. vi. 9, &c.) to the degree of glory of which they shall be made partakers in the Resurrection, when their souls and bodies shall be united in immortality. And consequently, it has been thought that when the Church prays for the accomplishment of the number of the elect, and the hastening of God's kingdom of glory, the souls of the faithful that are even now in joy and felicity with God, are interested in her petitions. In such a sense did the Church at first pray for the dead; but her practice, whatever view be taken of it, had nothing to do with purgatory, or with the idea that sins may be forgiven or purged away after death. That the sacrifice for the dead, and the benefits to be derived from it by them, alluded to in St. Patrick's canon, have no other meaning than what is consistent with these remarks, and so can afford no countenance to the Romish prayers for the dead in purgatory, has been proved by many passages out of ancient writers, alleged by Archbishop Ussher and others; to whom I must refer such of my readers as are anxious for more information on this point, seeing that my limits will not allow me to enlarge on it any further. It must however be confessed that even the practice

A. D. 492.

death, not
prayed for in
the earliest
times of the
Church.Prayers for
the dead,
how used at
first.

A.D. 492.

of praying for the forgiveness of sins of those who had died in the Lord, appears to be as old as the time of St. Chrysostom. Were it however as old as the Apostles themselves, this alone would no more justify our receiving it in opposition to the testimony of Holy Scripture, than it would justify us in denying the Resurrection of the dead, as some did even in their days.*

The modern doctrine of papal supremacy not taught by St. Patrick.

There is no passage in St. Patrick's writings, from which we can collect that he looked on the bishop of Rome as the supreme head of the whole Christian Church. A canon of very uncertain authority, which is ascribed to him, does indeed enjoin, that if any doubtful ecclesiastical case could not be decided by the archbishop of the Irish, it should be referred to the "Chair of the apostle Peter, which hath the authority of the city of Rome." Dr. Lanigan suspects, on very good grounds, that this canon is not genuine.† But even if it were, it contains nothing which may not be readily admitted, namely, that if any cause were found difficult to decide at home, the foreign Church to which recourse would be most naturally had for advice, was that established in the largest and most important Christian city, which from its position and circumstances at that period, and the constant intercourse then existing

A doubtful canon on the subject attributed to him, which, even if genuine, would not be satisfactory.

* See 1 Cor. xv. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 18.

† Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. p. 391.

between it and all parts of the world, was most calculated to become naturally, a centre of unity, and a place to which all Christians every where might well look for counsel and direction, the result of experience not to be had elsewhere.

But we have no evidence that St. Patrick, when he placed so much confidence in the Church of Rome in his day, (supposing him to have done so,) for soundness of judgment and purity of doctrine, had any idea that she would always *infallibly* and by the promise of Christ, retain the same unspotted and exalted character. The obstinate contentions which prevailed so very soon after this, between our countrymen and the Church of Rome, are in themselves sufficient to shew, how little the first Christian teachers of the Irish troubled themselves about inculcating such a doctrine as that of the supremacy of the bishop of Rome.

A. D. 492.

No proof of St. Patrick's having held Roman infallibility.

The principal writings of St. Patrick above mentioned, are considered his genuine works by all Roman Catholics, and by the most learned Protestant writers, Archbishop Ussher, Sir H. Spelman, &c. ; and indeed their purity of doctrine and freedom from the multiplicity of miraculous and absurd legends, in which later writers have so much indulged, is a strong evidence of their genuineness. Had they been forgeries of after

Genuineness of St. Patrick's Writings.

A.D. 492. times, invented by Romanists, we should no doubt have found them as full as other documents of the like character, of arguments of every sort in support of the pretensions of the bishop of Rome.

CHAP. VII.

OF THE ANCIENT IRISH SAINTS IN GENERAL, AND THE DIFFERENT ORDERS OF THEM.

Sen-Patrick
and St. Pa-
trick distin-
guished
from each
other.

THE account of St. Patrick's life and actions given in the preceding pages is, for the most part, that which has been commonly received among the learned, although with very considerable difference of opinion about the dates and other points of detail. It is right however that we should before quitting the subject, inform the reader, that there were several different persons named Patrick, who were more or less distinguished in the annals of the Irish Church; and that in the very earliest times of Christianity in this island, there were at least two eminent individuals so called; both of whom are mentioned even in the ancient Hymn of Fiech, a writer who is believed to have been partly a cotemporary with the Apostle of Ireland, and to have died early in the sixth century. (He was bishop of Sletty, in the Queen's

County, near the river Barrow, and about a mile to the west of Carlow). Mr. Petrie observes, that the most ancient Irish annals appear to distinguish the two Patrick's here spoken of, by calling the one St. Patrick, or Sen-Patrick, (i.e. Patrick the elder,) and the other, Patrick the Archbishop and Apostle : and while the death of the latter is referred to the year 492 or 493, the death of the first Patrick is placed by the same annalists in 458 or 461 : there also appears to Mr. Petrie to be sufficient ground for considering it probable that the first or Sen-Patrick preceded the mission of Palladius, and that he was the author of the *Confession* and *Irish Hymn* mentioned in his life : and also that he was buried at Glas-tonbury, in England : while in the obscurity that hangs over the records relating to the second Patrick, the learned and critical antiquary just quoted considers there is ground for suspecting, "that he may have been no other than the Palladius of the Roman authorities, whose life is involved in an equal degree of mystery : " an opinion in support of which many interesting facts are adduced by the author of it.* These however the narrow limits of the present work forbid us here to enlarge upon.

A. D. 492.
Mr. Petrie's
opinion of
the matter.

The second
Patrick pos-
sibly the
same with
Palladius.

During the lifetime of St. Patrick, and in the period immediately subsequent, Ireland was

A decline of
piety ob-
servable

* Essay on Tarah Hill, already quoted. p. 116.

A.D. 492.
after St.
Patrick's
time.

Revealed to
St. Patrick
himself in a
supposed
vision.

adorned by many illustrious persons born in her, and noted for learning and zeal in promoting the knowledge of the Christian faith. The purity of religion and fervour of piety did not however long flourish in their original perfection : for although succeeding ages still continued to be distinguished by many bright and holy examples of Christian life, who were even more numerous and more celebrated in history than their predecessors, yet the judgment of our ancient writers on the subject has pronounced that a decline, however slow and gradual, commenced very soon after the time of St. Patrick, and proceeded further and further, until the period of the Danish invasions in the ninth century, when things were supposed to have reached their worst state. These circumstances are said to have been revealed to St. Patrick himself in a prophetic vision, which disclosed to him the future condition of Ireland, on one occasion when he was engaged in anxious meditation on the prospects that were before her.* He is said to have seen first, "all Ireland as it were on fire, and the flames reaching up to heaven ;" then, after a little while, "fiery mountains as it were, in all parts of the island, stretching towards the skies. Presently, after the lapse of a short interval, he saw in several places as if

* Joceline's Life of St. Patrick, chap. 175 : in Colgan's *Trias*, p. 103.

lamps lighting, and soon after as the darkness grew thicker, small tapers, and at last a few coals reduced to ashes, but appearing still unextinguished, although hidden." The Saint was given to understand that by these appearances were represented the different states of Ireland, as it then was, and as it was to be in after ages; whereupon he burst into tears, and began repeating over and over the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses of the 77th Psalm, *Will the Lord cast off for ever, &c.* But the angel of God desired him to look to the North, and that he should see a change originating there; and accordingly he beheld in that quarter, first, a moderate sized light, arising and struggling long with the darkness, until at length it prevailed so as to illumine the whole island, and "grew brighter and stronger till it appeared to restore Ireland to its first fiery condition." The Saint, we are told, understood the blazing fire to represent the fervour of Christian faith and love, and zeal for religion manifested by the people of this island: the fiery mountains were the saints eminent for the great works which they performed, and their holy and virtuous lives: the waning away of the brightness was the decay of holiness: the darkness that covered the land set forth the spread of unbelief in it, and the subsequent pause, the interval of time succeeding. Joceline, who gives the preceding ac-

A. D. 492.

Joceline's
explanation.
A. D. 1185.

A. D. 492.

New Sacra-
ments and
ignorance of
Holy Scrip-
ture, marks
of the falling
away.

The vision
unfulfilled
hitherto.

count, says, that the Irish of his time supposed the period of darkness to be that when the pagan princes of Norway, Gurmundus, and afterwards Turgesius, reigned in Ireland. "For in those days the saints used to hide in caves and dens, like the coals buried in ashes, from the face of the sinners who were putting them to death all day long, like sheep of the slaughter. From whence it came to pass," as Joceline goes on to mention, "that various rites were introduced into Ireland contrary to the laws of the Church, and new sacraments, opposed to its constitution, were framed by prelates of Holy Church, ignorant of God's law."* We are further informed by the same writer, that the Irish people also believed the light that appeared in the north, to be Malachy, bishop of Down, and afterwards archbishop of Armagh, who was a very active and zealous ecclesiastic: while the English, on the other hand, considered that their own arrival, and arrangements relative to the Irish Church made by them, were the things pointed to in the prophetic light of the vision. It is now plain that whatever view be taken of the matter, both parties were clearly wrong, since neither Malachy nor the English can be imagined to have restored in the twelfth century the fervour of piety and purity of religion throughout all Ireland, that existed in St. Pa-

* Joceline's Life of St. Patrick, as above quoted.

trick's time ; and whoever is inclined to have any faith in our apostle's vision, has yet to look for that northern light, which is to shine forth over the dark places of the land, and restore to us again the glories of primitive Irish Christianity? A.D. 492.

The same gradual decay of religion after the age of St. Patrick, which is mentioned in the above narrative, is noticed also in a remarkable catalogue of the early Irish saints, published by Archbishop Ussher, from ancient manuscripts, in his *Antiquities of the British Churches*.* This catalogue deserves a very full notice here, inasmuch as it is regarded by the writers of our Church History in general as being a highly valuable record.† Dr. Lanigan considers that it “is a very interesting document throwing great light on our ancient ecclesiastical history. Even Ledwich, he adds, “admits that it is extremely valuable.”

This early decay of religion further illustrated from an ancient Catalogue of the Saints of Ireland:

According to this catalogue then, the Irish saints are divided into three classes, of which “the first order was most holy, the second order very holy, the third holy. The first was like the blazing sun, the second like the moon, the third like the stars.” An ancient transcriber of the

in which they are divided into three orders

* Ussher's Works, vol. vi. cap. xvii. p. 477. Ledwich's Antiquities, p. 415.

† Lanigan's Ec. Hist. vol. ii. p. 13. Ma-Geoghegan, Histoire de l'Irlande, tom. i. p. 321. Paris, 1758. Colgan, AA. SS. p. 276.

A. D. 492.

list adds, that “ St. Patrick was made acquainted with these three orders by divine revelation, when he beheld in that prophetic vision all Ireland covered with flaming fire, then saw only the mountains burning, and afterwards lamps burning in the vallies.” The following is the description given of each of the three classes, the character of the persons it comprehended, the period during which they flourished, &c.

The first order of Irish saints described.

“ The *first* order of Catholic saints was in the time of Patrick. And then all the bishops, to the number of three hundred and fifty, who were also founders of churches, were eminent and holy, and full of the Holy Spirit. They had one head, Christ, and one leader, Patrick: one mass, [or liturgy] one mode of celebration, one tonsure from ear to ear. They kept one Easter at the fourteenth of the moon after the vernal equinox: and whatever was a ground of excommunication with one church, they all punished with excommunication. They did not shun the services and society of women, because founded as they were on the rock Christ, they were not afraid of the blast of temptation. This order of saints lasted during four reigns, that is to say in the time of Laoghaire, and Olioll Molt, and Lughaidh, the son of Laoghaire, and Tuathal. All these bishops were from among the Romans, and Franks, and British, and Scots. (i.e. the Irish.)

A.D.
429.
463.
484.
534.

The second order of Catholic presbyters—for in this order there were few bishops, and many presbyters, to the number of three hundred. They had one head, our Lord; but used different masses, and different rules; one Easter at the 14th of the moon after the Equinox, one tonsure from ear to ear: they dispensed with the services of women, separating them from the monasteries. This order continued during four reigns more, that is, the latter part of Tuathal's reign, and the whole of king Diarmaid's, and in the time of the two grand-sons of Mortough, and Aidh son of Ainmerech. They received their liturgy from Bishops David, and Gildas, and Docus, the Britons; and their names are these: the two Finians, two Brendans, Jarlath of Tuam, Comgall, Coemgen, Ciaran, Columba, Caineach, Eogan mac Laisre, Lugeus, Ludeus, Moditeus, Cormac, Colman, Nesson, Laisrean, Barrindeus, Coeman, Ceran, Coman, Endeus, Ædeus, Byrchinus, and many others."

A. D. 492.
Description
of the se-
cond order.

A. D.
544.
565.
572.

"The third order of saints was of this sort. They were holy presbyters, and few bishops, a hundred in number; who inhabited desert places, and lived on herbs, and water, and the alms of the faithful, and had no property of their own: and they had different rules and liturgies, and a diversity of tonsure, (for some adopted the crown, while others let their hair grow behind,) and also

The third
order of
Irish saints
described.

A. D. 492.

A. D.

605.

626.

642.

658.

to 664.

a diversity of observance of the Easter Festival ; for some reckoned their Easter by the 14th of the moon, while others persevered in calculating it by the 16th. These lived during four reigns, [or dynasties, according to Lanigan,]* namely, those of Aodh, or Aeda Allain, (who in consequence of his evil devices reigned only three years,) and Domnail, and the disordered times of the sons of Mailcova and of Æda Slaine ; and continued down to that great mortality. These are their names ; Bishop Petran, Bishop Ultan, Bishop Colman, Bishop Murgeus, Bishop Ædan, Bishop Loman, Bishop Senachus. These are the bishops, as well as several others. The following are presbyters : Presbyter Fechin, Airendan, Failan, Coman, Commian, Colman, Ernan, Cronan, and very many other presbyters."

We have given this catalogue in full, because it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to have shortened it materially without making our account of it much less interesting and satisfactory to the reader. There now remains only room to make a very brief comment or two on this curious document :—1. Archbishop Ussher does not say to what age its composition is to be attributed ; but it was probably written at a very early period, the beginning perhaps of the eighth century, as the author brings down his list no

Remarks on
this ancient
Catalogue of
Saints.

* Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, vol. ii. p. 331.

farther than to the year 664.* 2. It is not very accurate in its statements as far as history and chronology, some of the kings included in the period to which it refers being entirely omitted. 3. Neither does it seem to represent with perfect accuracy the different characters of life of the individuals named in it; St. Coemghen or Kevin, for instance, might more properly be classed with the saints of the third order, according to the accounts of his life and habits that have come down to us. 4. It appears plainly from the description of the three orders given in this catalogue, that in proportion as our ancient saints became less eminent for true holiness, they paid more and more attention to the external form and outward appearance of sanctimony; and they who affected most austerity and separation from the world, were those whose religious character shone with the palest lustre. Seclusion from the society of women, living on herbs and alms, and retirement to a hermit's cave, are at best but dubious tests of real sanctity, and sink away into the shade, when compared with the higher qualifications of union with Christ the Lord as our head, sanctification by the indwelling of His Spirit, and mutual love and charity towards all them that love Him in sincerity and truth.

A.D. 492.

* Lanigan's Ec. Hist. ii. 13.

CHAP. VIII.

OF ST. BRIGID; AND THE OTHER SAINTS WHO LIVED IN THE AGE
NEXT AFTER THAT OF ST. PATRICK.

A. D. 453.

History of
St. Brigid,
born
A.D. 453.

WE proceed now to consider more particularly the history of some of the more distinguished of our early saints; among whom, following the order of time, the first to claim our attention will be the famous St. Brigid, or Bride, of Kildare, who is celebrated as one of the three patron saints of Ireland, not only among her own countrymen, but also throughout Europe.* Her history is, like that of St. Patrick, involved in considerable obscurity, no sufficiently ancient and authentic life of her, having come down to our times. There is however a sufficient agreement of authors concerning the most striking and important facts of her life, which are briefly as follows.

Her birth-
place and
parentage.

She was born about the year 453, at Fochard, a village about two miles north of Dundalk, in the Co. Louth, more recently called Faugher. Her father was a Christian of noble birth and kingly ancestry. In early youth she became distinguished for her singular piety, gentleness,

* Tillemont *Memoires Eccles.* t. xvi. p. 469. Colgan, *Tr. Th.* p. 623.

and extraordinary charity to the poor ; qualities for which she attained with growing years a still greater reputation. Having resolved to lead a life of perpetual virginity, she associated with herself a number of companions who were like-minded, and thus formed a religious community, which soon increased to an amazing extent, and became very famous throughout the land. After exerting herself in many parts of Ireland in the advancement of religion, in co-operation with different pastors of the Church, she at length consented, at the request of the people of Leinster, to come and settle among them. On her arrival she was received with a hearty welcome, and accommodated with a habitation for herself and her companions ; which was the commencement both of her great monastery, and of the town or city of Kildare. The latter place was so named from a very high oak tree which grew near that habitation or cell ; for the word *Kildare* signifies the cell or *church of the oak*. Some land was annexed to the house, as a help towards the maintenance of the inmates, who appear to have been poor in their circumstances, and partly dependant for their support on alms of various kinds which were bestowed upon them. But whatever property St. Brigid possessed or acquired in any manner, was shared by her with the poor, and wonderful instances of

A.D. 453.

Her settlement at Kildare.
A.D. 480?

A.D. 490.

her liberality are on record. The extraordinary veneration in which she was held for her deep piety, humbleness of mind, tenderness to the afflicted, and hospitality to all, caused a very great resort of persons to the neighbourhood of her dwelling; the poor and infirm applying for alms and relief, and all classes from the highest to the lowest seeking the benefit of her prayers. Meanwhile her own community was increasing greatly, and altogether there appeared to her much cause of anxiety for the spiritual superintendence and instruction of so large a number of persons. She therefore prevailed upon a devout person named Conlath to undertake the charge of the Church in her neighbourhood; and he accordingly became bishop there, and assisted her in all her efforts for the enlightenment of those around her.*

Origin of
the bishop-
ric of
Kildare.

Death
of St. Bri-
gid.
A.D. 523.

St. Brigid spent her whole life in Ireland,† and died, according to the best authorities, in A.D. 523 or 525,‡ at the advanced age of seventy years or upwards. She was therefore in part a cotemporary of St. Patrick "the Apostle" of Ireland, with whom she is said to have had various interviews. Her life was written by different authors in succeeding ages: of these writers the most celebrated is Cogitosus, a cler-

Her Life by
Cogitosus.
A.D. 830?

* Lanigan, Ec. Hist. vol. i. p. 406. † ib. 411. ‡ ib. 455.

gyman or monk of Kildare, who lived it appears at the beginning of the ninth century.* The work of this author, here alluded to, is an incoherent, ill-arranged production, and can hardly be called a Life at all, being rather a wild sort of panegyric on her virtues and alleged miracles: it is however a very famous production, and not without some interesting features: such as for instance its mentioning that St. Brigid was in the habit of "scattering among all around her the most wholesome seed of the word of God,"† and its entire silence with regard to papal supremacy, transubstantiation, adoration of saints and angels, purgatory, and all that class of opinions which many readers would naturally expect to find much dwelt upon in the life of such a saint, but which are better suited to the genius of more modern writers and more modern times.

A. D. 522.

Her efforts
to disseminate the
Scriptures.

About the same time with St. Brigid flourished the celebrated St. Finnian of Clonard in Meath. His early history is veiled in impenetrable obscurity, and full of anachronisms and contradictions. It appears however that before settling in the work of the ministry in his native land, he spent some time in travels abroad. Returning home he lived for seven years at a place called Magna, (in the King's County or Carlow,)

St. Finnian
of Clonard,
died
A. D. 552.

* lb. 379. † Colgan, Tr. Th. p. 521. c. 23; and in Basnage's *Canisius*, vol. i. p. 420.

A.D. 530.

giving lectures in the Holy Scriptures.* The foundation of his famous seminary at Clonard is assigned to the year 530 or thereabouts. It was flocked to by crowds of students and distinguished persons, among whom were many of the most eminent Christians of their day, (including the celebrated St. Columbkille,) who came attracted by St. Finnian's great reputation for learning and sanctity. Clonard was an ancient episcopal see, and Finnian is by some authors spoken of as its first bishop, though others describe him as being only abbot of the place. He died in A.D. 552, or as some state in 563.†

St. Finnian
of Moville,
died
A.D. 576.

There was also another eminent Finnian who flourished at this period, and governed the monastery of Moville in Down; with whom St. Columbkille is said to have studied at first, before going to Clonard. The death of St. Finnian of Moville is assigned to the year 576.‡

St. Kieran
of Clonmac-
noise, born
A.D. 507.

In this age lived also St. Kieran, commonly called the *Son of the Artificer*, founder of the famous abbey of Clonmacnoise in the King's County, on the banks of the Shannon. He was born, according to Dr. Lanigan, in 507, and studied with St. Finnian at Clonard. In 548 he came to settle at Clonmacnoise, and on a piece of ground there which was granted him by Diermit, king of Ireland, founded his monastery: but did not long survive to govern it; for in the

* Lanigan's Ec. Hist. i. 465. † ib. vol. ii. 22. ‡ ib. 25.

next year he died of pestilence in the prime of life. He had attained however a very high character, and his memory has been regarded among his countrymen with the highest veneration.* A. D. 549.

A second Kieran, known as St. Kieran of Saigir, (in the King's County also,) is in some legends stated to have been a bishop in Ireland before the time of St. Patrick, and as such, is in those legends honoured with the title of the *first-born of the saints of Ireland*. But this account of him is regarded as fabulous by the most prudent writers. It is more likely, according to Dr. Lanigan, that he lived until after the death of St. Kieran of Clonmacnoise; but the year of his own death is not recorded. Some suppose him to have died in Cornwall in England, and to have been the same with St. Piran, an Irish saint, from whom a chapel in that county (Piranzabuloe, or St. Piran's in the sands,) derives its name.† St. Kieran of Saigir,
possibly the same with St. Piran.

St. Jarlath, first bishop of Tuam, is enumerated among the saints of this period; having been born probably about the beginning of the sixth century. But we have no record of the precise time of his birth or death, or of any thing very interesting in his life.‡ St. Jarlath of Tuam.

At the same time also lived St. Brendan,

* Ib. p. 50. † Ib. 7. and vol. i. p. 29; and Camden's *Britannia*, by Gough. London, 1789. vol. i. p. 6. ‡ Lanigan, ii. 41.

A. D. 508. *St. Brendan of Clonfert, A.D. 558.* abbot of Clonfert, who founded his monastery there about A.D. 558 : some writers make him first bishop of the see of Clonfert, but he was more probably only abbot, as is stated by the most ancient writers. He died on May 16th, in 577, aged ninety-four ; and is said to have presided over three thousand monks, who supported themselves by the labours of their own hands.*

St. Brendan of Birr, died A.D. 571. Another Brendan, who from the place of his monastery is called Brendan of Birr, flourished at the same period. He is reckoned among the disciples of Finnian of Clonard, and was intimate with the two Kierans, his namesake of Clonfert, and specially with St. Columbkille. He was probably born later than the former Brendan, but died before him in 571.†

St. Ruadan of Lorrain Contemporary with the Brendans was St. Ruadan, another pupil of the seminary at Clonard ; who became priest and abbot of Lothra or Lorrain in Tipperary. He is most remarkable for having been the cause of the desertion of Tarah by the kings of Ireland after the year 565. For it is said that in consequence of a quarrel which he had with Diermit, who was then king of Ireland, he cursed the place with bell, book, and candle, after which no monarch could hope to flourish, or even venture to live in that place. St. Ruadan died in 584.‡

curse
Tarah with
bell, book,
and candle.

St. Comgall, or Coemgell, founder of the fa-

* Lanigan, ii. 28. † ib. 23. ‡ ib. 233, and Colgan, Tr. Th. p. 6 ; and Petrie's Essay, p. 125.

mous monastery of Bangor, (anciently Benchor,) in the county Down, was born in that county in 516; or earlier, as some say. He studied in Leinster with St. Fintan of Clonenagh, and having returned to his own country, established the institution of Bangor about the year 559. Such numbers flocked together to place themselves under his spiritual superintendence, that he is said to have had the charge of no less than three thousand belonging to his community, and following the rule of life prescribed by him. Among them was the celebrated St. Columbanus, of whom hereafter. St. Comgall governed the institution at Bangor until his death, which occurred in A.D. 601.*

A. D. 559.
St. Comgall
of Bangor,
born
A.D. 515.

The next of the saints belonging to the second class already spoken of who requires to be noticed in this place, is the famous Kevin of Glendalough; (or *Coemhghen*, according to the original Irish orthography, the pronunciation being the same.) He is said to have lived one hundred and twenty years; and as he died in 618, it would appear from this that he must have been born in the year 498: Dr. Lanigan however considers that there is good reason for doubting whether he were born so early as this. At the age of seven years he was consigned to the care of Petroc, a learned and holy Briton; and after having been instructed by him and others for

St. Kevin
of Glenda-
lough, died
A.D. 618.

His history.

* Lanigan, ii. 61.

A.D. 549.

Meaning of
Glenda-
lough
explained.

St. Senan
of Iniscatthy
born
A.D. 488 ?

several years, and given much attention to religious studies, he returned to his own country, and founded the monastic establishment of Glendalough: though in what year, we do not find recorded; Ussher guesses 549, on very slender evidence however. Having well arranged the order and discipline of this institution, he retired to the upper part of the valley about a mile from the monastery, and there in a small place beset with thick trees and refreshed with rivulets, led the life of a hermit for four years, until at length his monks prevailed on him to return to their society. *Glen-da-lough* is an Irish compound, signifying *the valley of the two lakes*, and is an appropriate name for the place, expressive of its real character.*

Among the eminent persons of this age, St. Senan of Iniscatthy occupies too conspicuous a place to be left unnoticed here. He was born it seems about A.D. 488, (in Limerick or Clare,) of respectable Christian parents. He was in early youth distinguished for the piety by which he became in after life so famous; and devoted himself with much earnestness to the pursuit of sacred learning, first in his native country, and afterwards in travels on the continent and in Britain. According to the custom of his age, he began after his return home, to show his zeal for the propagation of religion by establishing

* Lanigan, ii. 43.

monastic institutions in different places. The first of these was at Inniscarra, on the river Lee, about five miles above the city of Cork : after founding which and different others, we find him at length settled in the island of Iniscatthy, (or as some call it Inniscattery,) in the mouth of the Shannon. His monastery there was established between the years 534 and 540 ; and it was one of its rules that no females should be admitted into the island, at least if we believe the legendary accounts of the Saint's life which are on record. This rule furnishes an illustration of the description already given of the second class of saints in Ireland. (See p. 61.) St. Senan was a bishop when he founded Iniscatthy. He continued to govern the institution there until his death, which took place according to Ussher in A.D. 544 : Dr. Lanigan thinks not so early.*

A.D. 540.
founds mo-
nastery of
Inniscarra,
Co. Cork.

St. Cainech, Canice, or Kenny, (as he is variously called,) was born in the north of Ireland (in or near Derry) in 516. He spent some years in Britain, studying with the venerable Abbot Docus, and afterwards attended the school of St. Finnian of Clonard ; then preached for some years in the northern parts of Ireland, and at length removed to the south, and settled at Aghaboe in Ossory, which afterwards became the residence of the bishops of that see. St. Canice founded the monastery of Aghaboe at

St. Canice
of Aghaboe,
born
A.D. 516.

* Ib. vol. i. p. 445, and vol. ii. pp. 2, 3, 90.

A.D. 577.

some period prior to the year 577; and ruled it as abbot until the year 599, in which he died. He was an intimate friend of St. Columbkille, the Brendans, Comgall, and other eminent men who flourished in the same age. It is from him that Kilkenny (i. e. Kenny's Church) derives its name.*

St. Colum-
ba and St.
Colum-
banus.

Of the famous saints of this period we have here omitted to notice two, namely, St. Columba and St. Columbanus, because the importance of their histories requires that a fuller account of their lives should be laid before the reader, and this may be more conveniently done in separate chapters. Our narrow limits exclude the possibility of introducing any mention of the other numerous and celebrated, but comparatively less eminent persons who flourished at the same æra.

CHAP. IX.

OF THE LIFE AND ACTIONS OF ST. COLUMBKILLE.

Life of St.
Columba.

Of all the Irish saints that were the ornaments of their Church and country in the ages following that in which St. Patrick lived, none shone forth with so bright a lustre as the famous St. Columba, the apostle of the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland, and the founder and

* Lanigan, ii. 200.

first abbot of the celebrated monastery of Iona. A. D. 521.
 The more common name of Columb-kille (i. e. *Meaning of*
Columb of the Churches) by which he is usually the name
 known, was given him in consequence of the Colum-
 great number of churches and monasteries of kille.
 which he was the founder.

This holy man was descended from the royal St. Colum-
 family of Ireland, his father Fethlimid having ba's parent-
 been grandson of the celebrated monarch Niall age, birth-
 Naoighiallach, (or Niall of the Nine Hostages :) place, &c.
 his mother also was of noble birth.* It appears A. D. 521.
 from a comparison of the best authorities that
 he was born in A. D. 521, and at a place called
 Gartin, in the county Donegal, near the town of
 Letterkenny ; where his name is to this day held
 in the greatest veneration, so that in that part
 of Ireland the fame of St. Patrick is greatly
 eclipsed by his. In very early youth he shewed
 evident signs of the piety for which he was af-
 terwards so distinguished ; and his parents lost
 no time in providing him with such an education His educa-
 as tended to qualify him for the sacred office of tion.
 the ministry, for which he seemed in the provid-
 ence of God to be designed. They first placed
 him under the care of a devout presbyter, whose
 name is said (but on slender authority) to have
 He studies
 with St.
 Finnian of
 Moville and
 others.

* Lanigan's Ec. Hist. ii. 106, and the notes and references there.
 N.B.—We refer constantly to this writer as being one of the most
 learned and critical authors on the subject, and as containing refer-
 ences to Adamnanus, Colgan, &c. with useful notes.

A. D. 544.

been Cruinechan : and from him he received, during his boyhood, the rudiments of a Christian education. After this he repaired for further instruction to the school of St. Finnian of Moville, which had then a high character and was numerous attended : and before leaving the latter seminary he had been ordained to the office of deacon. He subsequently visited Leinster for the purpose of study, and enjoyed while there the instructions of a venerable teacher of considerable reputation named Germanus : and finally, according to some accounts, he also attended the lectures of St. Finnian of Clonard.*

A. D. 544?

He founds
the monas-
tery of
Derry,
A.D. 546.

Having returned to his own country, Tyrconnel, the first business of importance which we find attributed to him in that quarter, is the foundation of the monastery of Doire-Calgaich, (near Lough Foyle,) from which the town of Derry derived its name and origin. The site for building and land connected with it were given to him by his relatives who were the princes of the country. When this institution had been established on a sufficiently firm basis, he next visited other parts of Ireland for the purpose of promoting religion ; and at a place called Dairmagh, (now Durrogh in the King's County,) he established another monastic institution, which in a short time attained to very great celebrity. Bede notices it in these terms : " Previously to

And that of
Durogh,
A.D. 550?

* Lanigan's Ec. Hist. ii. 117.

his coming to Britain he had founded in Ireland a noble monastery, which from the number of oaks growing there is called in the language of the Scots (i.e. *the Irish*) Dearthach, that is, Oak-field.” A. D. 550.

It seems to have been at this period of his history that St. Columba was raised to the holy order of presbyter ; to which he was set apart by Etchen, bishop of Cluain-foda, (now Clonesfad in Westmeath;) this took place, it is supposed, about A.D. 551. Shortly after, he is said to have visited Kennanus,* now Kells, in East Meath, and to have founded a monastery in the place : and there is to this day in the church-yard of Kells, a small stone-roofed building commonly known as *St. Columbkille's House*. The tradition however which thus connects the name of St. Columba with the church of Kells, is a very uncertain one, and at variance with some of the best authorities on the subject ; which attribute the foundation of that church to Kellach, abbot of Hy, in 807. A similar remark applies to various other churches, whose origin is popularly assigned to St. Columba, as for instance those of Raphoe, Rathlin Island, (off the coast of Antrim) Drumcliffe, (in Sligo), Swords, and Skryne, (in Meath,) with others : none of which were, in all probability, founded by him ; but rather by his

His sup-
posed visit
to Kells, &c.
After
A.D. 551.

* ib. 125.

A.D. 451. disciples and others at different periods after his death. Yet it is very likely that in addition to the institutions of Derry and Durrow, many other churches founded at the same period may have owed their origin to the Christian zeal of this active servant of God.*

His mission
to the High-
lands,
A.D. 563
or 565.

Ireland however had now for a considerable time enjoyed the light of the Gospel, and abounded as we have seen in saints and learned men; while the isles and northern parts of Scotland were still covered with darkness, and in the shackles of superstition. On these benighted regions, therefore, Columba looked with a pitying eye, and resolved however forbidding the prospect, to undertake the mission to the Highlands. Accordingly in the year of Redemption 565, as Bede tells us, he came "to preach the Word of God" in those provinces.† It appears however that he left Ireland two years earlier than this, for we read in his own life that his departure from his native land took place in A.D. 563.‡ It is supposed, with considerable probability, that he may have spent the intervening period in the island of Iona, founding his monastery there, and getting it into order, previously to his entering upon his mission among the Picts. He is said to have brought with him twelve companions to assist in his arduous undertakings. His zeal had indeed

* Lanigan, ii. 132. † Hist. Ec. I. iii. c. 4. ‡ Adamnanus, Lib. i.

many combined disadvantages to contend with, but his labours were notwithstanding attended with wonderful success, so that in the course of a few years, "by the power of his word and example," the greater part of the Pictish or Highland kingdom was brought to the knowledge of the Gospel, and the superstitions of Druidism were dissipated by the holy influence of Christian light and truth.

A. D. 563.

Its success.

Connected with the circumstance of St. Columba's departure from Ireland, there is on record a very strange and curious story of certain occurrences which are said to have given occasion to his undertaking this mission. The narrative is too remarkable, and too often referred to, to be omitted here; the reader must however be forewarned that it is regarded as apocryphal by some of the most learned and judicious writers on the subject.*

Curious tradition connected with St. Columba's departure from Ireland,

St. Columba, it is said, being on a visit with St. Finnian of Moville, obtained from him a loan of some part of the Holy Scriptures; which, being greatly pleased with it, he began to transcribe from beginning to end, without Finnian's knowledge; and used to stay in the church of the place where he was, after service, by day and night, for the purpose of carrying on the writing, without being interrupted or observed. The copy

relative to a dispute between him and St. Finnian.

* Lanigan's Ch. Hist. ii. 144.

A.D. 561.

King Diermit's decision.

Further cause of strife between Diermit and St. Columba.

was nearly finished, when Finnian, having occasion for his manuscript, sent a messenger to get it from the Saint; who discovered the proceeding, and made Finnian also acquainted with it. Upon this the latter became highly displeased, and told Columba that he had no right to have copied privately, and without his consent, a book which belonged to him: he also demanded the copy for himself, as having been in some sort the produce and offspring of his own book. St. Columba replied, that he would leave the matter to the arbitration of Diermit, then king of all Ireland; to whose judgment the case was accordingly referred. He decided in favour of Finnian, giving sentence in a remarkable form of Irish words, which afterwards became proverbial among the people. *Le gach boin a boinin, agus le gach leabhar a leabhran*; i.e., To every cow belongs its calf, so likewise to every book its copy.* Enraged at the injustice of this decree, St. Columba predicted, (as the story says,) that such a perversion of equity should not be long without vengeance.

We are further told, that to widen the breach between the Saint and King Diermit, another unfortunate circumstance occurred about the same period. Curnan, son of Aidus, king of Connaught,

* O'Donel's Life of St. Columba, in Colgan's Tr. Th. commencement of Book ii.

who was living as a hostage with Diermit, was guilty of the homicide of a son of one of the King's ministers; whereupon he fled to Columba for protection from the fury of the monarch; but was dragged from the Saint's bosom by order of Diermit, and immediately put to death. This cruelty added still more to Columba's resentment, so that addressing the king, he told him that he would make a complaint to the princes of the north, his relations, for the injuries he had received: and he accordingly made his escape into Ulster, and addressed them on the subject.

A. D. 561.

Upon this, his cousin Anmireus, the chieftain of Kinell-Connuill, (i.e. Donegal,) and the two brothers Fergus and Domnald, heads of Kinel-Eoguin, (Tyrone,) soon raised an army, and assisted by Aidus, king of Connaught, challenged King Diermit to battle. The engagement took place at Cuilidremneor Culedreivne, a place in the territory of Cairbre, not far from Sligo to the north; and was fought in the year 561. And we are told that during the battle, St. Finnian was occupied in prayer for the success of the King's party, and, on the other side, Columba for that of his relatives and friends; but that the prayers of the latter being more efficacious, Diermit's army was defeated with the loss of 3000 men, whereas only one was lost on the other side. By St. Columba's mediation a peace

Battle of
Cuilidremne,
A.D. 561.

A. D. 561.

Conclusion
of the story.

was then made, and the matter settled; the book which had caused the war being secured to him.

Then it follows that the saints of Ireland, reflecting that Columba had been either the originator or the occasion of this mischievous war, gave it as their common opinion, that he ought by some public humiliation, to do what lay in his power to remedy the scandal on religion to which his conduct was calculated to give rise; and they referred him to St. Lasrean, (otherwise called Molaise,) of Devenish, as the person most suitable to suggest what course to pursue in this emergency. Columba received the advice with humility, and acted accordingly: and the sentence of Molaise was, "that he should spend the rest of his life an exile in a foreign soil where he should attach more persons to Christ than had fallen in the war." The Saint, sorrowful, but resigned, replied "it shall be done."*

Credibility
of this nar-
rative.

Such is the purport of this strange narrative: but as already intimated, it seems worthy of but little credit, the authors for it being of a very inferior class, while neither Bede, nor Adamnanus (the principal ancient biographer of St. Columba) says any thing about it. Adamnanus only mentions that Columba left Ireland two years after the battle of Culedreivne, the occurrence of which is a sufficiently certain historical fact;

* Lanigan's Ec. Hist. ii. 146. O'Donel, ut sup.

and it is very possible that Columba may have had some connection with it; this at least, if no other, that he must have been interested for the welfare of the princes, his relatives; and may very probably have offered up his prayers for their success. Adamnanus does indeed in another place record that Columba was once excommunicated by a synod of the Church; but he says that it was unjustly, and for some trifling and excusable matters, and that the sentence was reversed by the interposition of St. Brendan of Birr. It is probable that this excommunication occurred at an earlier period of Columba's life, perhaps about A.D. 550. On the whole we may safely say, that there is no sufficient historic evidence that any such dispute as that here mentioned ever occurred between Finnian and Columba, and it is much more likely that they continued to be mutual and good friends until death.

A. D. 561.

After leaving Ireland, St. Columba took up his residence in the island of Iona, one of the smallest of the Western Isles of Scotland, which became his dwelling place from that to the time of his death, at least when he was not engaged in missionary work or other travelling.* The original name of this little place was I, Hy, or Aoi, (as written in the ancient Irish annals,) a word signifying an island, which was Latinized into Iona

Columba
settles in
Iona,
A.D. 563.

* Adamnanus, lib. i. cap. 1. Lanigan, ii. 154.

A. D. 565.

How Columba became possessed of Iona.

or Hyona : it is now called, in memory of the Saint, I-colm-kill, and is included in one of the parishes of the large adjoining island of Mull. In this beloved retirement Columba used in seasons of repose to enjoy the converse and society of his Christian brethren, or meditate in more solitary seclusion upon the sweet prospect of the blessedness in store for the people of God, and the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. From the same abode he would at other times issue forth upon excursions through the mainland of the Picts for the propagation of religion ; or visit by sea for the same purpose the different regions of the Hebrides, *giving glory unto the Lord, and declaring his praise in the islands.** The monastery which he founded in Iona became afterwards conspicuously illustrious for the eminent men whom it sent forth into the world to serve in the cause of religion ; some of whom were the means of rescuing a very large part of England from Paganism under the Saxon princes. It appears that Iona was given to Columba by a relative of his named Conall, king of the Dalriodans or Albanian Scots, an Irish Colony that had settled in North Britain, and established a kingdom there in A.D. 503. The British Dalriadies comprehended a large portion of Southern Scotland, including Argyle, Kantyre, &c., and most

* Isaiah, xlii. 12 .

of the Western Isles.* Bede indeed says, that Iona belonged to the Picts, and that it was they who after their conversion gave it to St. Columba; but the account above given appears more likely to be the true one.

A. D. 565.

The particulars of St. Columba's missionary labours among the Picts, and the history of the churches and ecclesiastical institutions established in the newly converted provinces, are involved in the greatest obscurity, no accounts of them beyond the most unsatisfactory hints being on record: nor have we a much better knowledge of his proceedings in the Western Isles; only the names of several of them are recorded, which he visited in the course of his labours, together with trifling anecdotes connected with such visits. Sometimes also he appeared among the British Scots, and occasionally too, it would seem, among his own countrymen in Ireland, promoting the Christian cause, and transacting business connected with the Church. When in Iona also he was frequently visited by persons from Ireland, who came to consult him on such matters, or to enjoy for a time the privilege of his society; and they were sure to meet with a hospitable reception from him. So passed his days, as far as we can learn, from the time of his leaving Ireland to the year in which he came over to attend the

The records of St. Columba's mission obscure and imperfect.

* Lenigan, ii. 159.

A. D. 565.
 He crowns
 Aidan king
 of Scotland
 in Hy,
 A.D. 574.

Council of Drumceat, of which we shall speak presently. The most remarkable event to be met with in this portion of his history is the circumstance of his having been chosen to inaugurate Aidan as king of the British Scots, in A.D. 574, after the death of Conal. Aidan came to Hy for the purpose, and there Columba performed the ceremony.*

Nature of
 the Council
 of Drum-
 ceat,
 A.D. 590.

The assembly at Drumkeath or Drumceat was a convention of the states-general of the kingdom of Ireland, in the year 590, under Aodh or Hugh, who was then supreme monarch. It was held for the purpose of settling some very important questions connected with affairs of the kingdom, in which St. Columba took no small interest. One of these was a dispute between the monarch Hugh, and Aidan, king of the British Scots, relative to the sovereignty of the territory of Dalrieda, in Antrim; which Aidan claimed as his own, and wished in consequence to exempt from certain burdens paid by the other parts of Ireland to the king of that country. It was from this Dalrieda, (comprehending the North, North West, and part of the South of Antrim,) that the Scottish kingdom in Britain was also called Dalrieda, as having been founded by the family of the princes of the Irish Dalrieda. In the contest between the two kings, St. Columba mediated so

Dalrieda in
 Antrim, ex-
 tent of, and
 how con-
 nected with
 the British
 Dalrieda.

* Lanigan, ii. 173.

successfully, that they both agreed to leave the matter to his arbitration. He however wisely declined taking on himself such an office, and the affair was referred to Colman, a man excellently well versed in legal and ecclesiastical learning ; who arranged the business by deciding against Aidan. There were other matters also of great importance transacted in the convention at Drumkeath, in which Columba took an equally prominent part ; but of these things we cannot stay now to speak particularly.

A. D. 590.

Columba remained at Drumkeath but for a short time. After leaving that place it appears that he continued in Ireland for some time, visiting different religious establishments founded by himself and others ; after which he returned again to Iona : nor are we informed that he left it any more till the time of his death.

St. Columba
returns to
Iona.

CHAP. X.

OF THE BIOGRAPHERS OF ST. COLUMBA, AND OF HIS DEATH.

THE reader of these pages will naturally wish to know what ancient records of St. Columba remain to our days, and what are the sources from which we derive our knowledge of his history ; and it will be therefore desirable to introduce in

Of the writers of St. Columba's life.

A. D. 590.

Cumeneus
or Cumin,
and Adam-
nanus.Nature of
their writ-
ings.Other lives
of St. Co-
lumba no-
ticed.
Five edited
by Colgan.

this place a brief account of the documents in question.

First then two of his successors, Cumin and Adamnan, composed memoirs of him at a very early period: the former wrote about sixty, and the latter about eighty-three years after the Saint's death. They had both therefore very good opportunities of coming at the knowledge of every thing that concerned him. But unhappily these good men, instead of describing simply the real circumstances of his life, have occupied their time in giving us a marvellous detail of visions, prophecies, and miracles, which they boldly ascribe to him. It is but candid to suppose that they themselves believed what they wrote, but their wonders are more adapted to gratify the credulous imagination of the superstitious, than to satisfy the desires of the thinking piety, which in history as well as in doctrine, looks for "words of truth and soberness."

Besides the two lives of St. Columba here mentioned, many others were afterwards published, of which the greater part have been since lost. Colgan, who published the seven lives of St. Patrick already noticed, has also in the same work given five of those of Columba; of which the two above mentioned are the most important. That of Adamnanus is indeed the most important of all, and it is prized by Roman Ca-

tholics especially, as being one of the most perfect specimens of that sort of biography which so early an age, or indeed all the middle ages, can boast of.

A. D. 590.

But in Venerable Bede, the illustrious historian of the early English Church, who wrote in A.D. 731, we have perhaps the most valuable record of St. Columba's life. It is indeed a brief memorial of him, but yet a comprehensive one: and though contained in a single chapter of Bede's work, it comprises a clear and satisfactory account of most of the principal circumstances connected with the Saint's history.

V. Bede's mention of St. Columba. A. D. 731.

The death of St. Columba was as edifying to those who witnessed it as his life had been; and he departed from the world in the same "hope full of immortality" that he had ever manifested in his progress through it. The circumstances connected with the closing scene of his life, as recorded by his principal biographer, are of such an interesting nature, that I am sure none of my readers will be disposed to find fault with me for introducing here an account of the last day he spent on earth, in Adamnanus's own words, as nearly as possible, only omitting some things less worthy of being mentioned here, visions, &c., which that author notices, and abridging some of the less striking parts of his narrative.

Account of St. Columba's death, from Adamnanus.

Adamnanus, abbot of Iona, (who is by some

A. D. 597.

Adamnanus
not without
some beauty
of style.

called also Adamannus or Adomnanus,) flourished in A.D. 690; and his Life of St. Columba is one of the most curious records that remain of our ancient saints. Whatever credulity or indiscretion may appear throughout his work, the piety and beauty of some parts will be admitted by all; of which the passages here introduced will afford sufficient specimens.

Columba's
last day on
earth, and
anticipation
of his death.

Columba's last week on earth is fast hastening to its close: "on the last day therefore," we are told, "of this same week, that is, on the Sabbath day,* the venerable man himself, and his pious attendant Dermot, proceed to the adjoining granary to bless it;"† and when this act of piety had been performed, after uttering a thanksgiving for the two heaps of corn which he found there, the Saint congratulated his brethren on having in them a sufficient store of food for the coming year in case of his removal from among them. And then dwelling much in his thoughts on his nearly approaching end, and unwilling to conceal from his faithful Dermot what he saw in prospect before him, he promised to disclose to him more particular information about it, on condition of his keeping it a profound se-

* It is to be observed that the Sabbath day is here used in its Scriptural sense to signify *Saturday*. In the times of Columba and Adamnanus, it had not yet been applied commonly by any persons to designate "the Lord's day," or "first day of the week."

† Adamn. iii. 28.

cret ; " and when in compliance with the Saint's wish, his attendant had on bended knees given utterance to a promise to this effect, the venerable man thus proceeds :—' This day is in the sacred volume called the Sabbath, which is interpreted *rest* ; and to-day is verily a Sabbath for me ; because it is the last with me of this present toilsome life, upon which after all my toils and sorrows, I come to enjoy my Sabbath : and at the approaching hour of midnight, as the hallowed day of the Lord begins, I shall, as the Scripture saith, be going the way of my fathers. For now my Lord Jesus Christ vouchsafes to invite me to himself, and when this midnight as I say comes, I shall go at his own bidding to be with him.' Upon hearing these sad words, his attendant began to weep bitterly, while the Saint endeavoured to the best of his power to comfort him."*

A. D. 597.

His assurance and certain hope of heavenly bliss.

Presently after, " ascending the hill which overhung the monastery, he stood at the top of it a little while ; and as he stood there, with uplifted hands pronounced a blessing on his community," in terms expressive of the future greatness which he foresaw it would attain to. After which " descending from that eminence and returning to the monastery, he remained sitting in his chamber writing the Psalter ; and coming

His last occupation on earth.

* *ib.*

A. D. 597.

to that verse in the thirty-third Psalm* where it is written, *but they that seek the Lord shall not want any manner of thing that is good*, 'Here,' said he, 'at the close of the page, I must come to a stop; what comes after let Baithen write.' "

Who Baithen was.

We must here note that this Baithen was the cousin, favourite disciple, and immediate successor of Columba as abbot of Iona; and that he also was much renowned for his wisdom, learning, and sanctity. But to proceed with our narrative.

Adamnanus's comment on the last writing of St. Columba.

Adamnanus next goes on to remark that "the last verse which he had written was well suited to this departing saint, who shall never want for good things throughout' eternity. And the verse that follows, *Come ye children and hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord*, was equally well suited to his successor, father as he was and instructor of spiritual children; who according to the charge of his dying friend, succeeded him not only in the teaching, but in the writing too.

St. Columba's last vespers.

"After having written to the end of the above mentioned verse, which terminated that page, the Saint goes to church to be present at vesper service of the Lord's-day eve; at the close of which, returning to his humble abode, he rests for part of the night on his couch, where he had

* The thirty-fourth in our Bibles, according to the Hebrew.

the bare flag for straw, and for his pillow a stone, which to the present day stands near his grave, as a sort of monumental inscription for it.*

A. D. 597.

"Afterwards when his happy end approached, the Saint enjoyed repose for a short time previously: then as the midnight bell was heard to ring, rising up hastily he goes to the church, and running before the rest and coming in alone, he sinks on bended knees in prayer." Dermot presently comes in before the brethren had assembled with their lights, and feeling in the dark for his master, discovers him sunk in a dying state: he raises him, and sitting beside him, places his head with reverent affection to rest on his own bosom. The others had now arrived; the dying man unable any longer to speak, raised, with Dermot's aid, his feeble right hand to bless his monks, "so that he might appear even with a motion of his hand to convey to his brethren that benediction which he was unable to express orally from his breath failing him. And after having thus imparted to them his solemn blessing, he immediately breathed forth his spirit." The cold hand of death could not however destroy the constant serenity of his countenance, but the cheerful placid expression that remained after life had fled, seemed rather like the repose of sleep than the torpor of death. Peace was

He goes to attend midnight service, and breathes his last in the church.

* *Adamn.* iii. 29.

A. D. 597. now his portion, sorrow that of the survivors, and "the whole church echoed with their sad wailing."*

His burial.

"Meanwhile after the departure of his sacred spirit, morning hymns having ended, the revered remains are removed from the church, accompanied by the brethren's sweet psalmody, to the abode from which a little before he had come out alive. And for three days and as many nights the becoming ceremonies suitable to the occasion are duly performed with all propriety: which having ended in the praise of the God of Wisdom, the venerated remains of our holy and happy patron, wrapped in fair linen and placed in a convenient receptacle, are interred with due solemnity, to rise in bright and everlasting glory."†

Closing remarks of Adamnanus.

"This then," continues Adamnanus, "was the close of our illustrious patron's life, this his entrance on his recompense; who now, according to the sentences of the Scriptures, admitted as a companion to former saints in their eternal triumphs, joined with apostles and prophets, numbered with the company of the thousands arrayed in white, of the saints who have washed their robes in the Lamb's blood, follows the Lamb for his leader, a spotless virgin free from every stain, through the grace of our Lord Jesus

* ib. 31.

† ib. 32.

Christ himself, who with the Father hath all honour, power, praise, and glory and dominion, for ever, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen." A. D. 597.

Such was Columba's end ; such the recital of it given by his distinguished successor. My Roman Catholic readers will look in vain for various particulars, which they may naturally think too important to be omitted in recording the dying scene of a priest of the Church departing in the Catholic faith, but on which nevertheless, Adamnanus is utterly silent. No anointing occupies the thoughts of the dying Saint : no purgatory is conceived to open for him its dismal doors ; no torments after death are thought necessary to remove the stain or guilt of his forgiven sins : no prayers are lost in the idle effort to raise him to that holy heaven where he would have been before them ; but when, absent from the body, he had gone to be present with the Lord, the temporary sorrow which nature exacted from those who remained on earth, soon gave way to the chastened joy of "sweet psalmody" and thanksgiving, on behalf of the bright jewel rescued from all the defilements of earth, and set for ever in the Redeemer's diadem.

The narrative not Romish in its character.

Columba's death took place on the 9th of June, in consequence of which that day is marked as his festival in the calendar of the Irish saints.

A. D. 597.

As to the exact year in which he died, there exists a slight uncertainty; the question appearing to be between A.D. 596 and 597. That the latter was the true date seems however all but certain, and would be entirely so but for some curious coincidences which favour the opinion of those who have assigned the event to the former year: to enter into the details of such a question any further in a work such as the present would be out of place, and the reader who desires more explicit information concerning it must refer to larger books on the subject.* Tradition informs us that the bones of St. Columba were afterwards removed to Down in Ulster, and buried in one grave with those of St. Patrick and St. Brigid.

CHAP. XI.

CHARACTER OF ST. COLUMBA AND HIS SUCCESSORS.

A. D. 597.
Character of
St. Colum-
ba.

HAVING thus far considered the principal transactions of Columba's life from infancy to the grave, it will be desirable for us here to rest a little, and contemplate the character of this eminent saint, whom God was pleased to make use of for so signal an instrument of his own

* Lanigan's Ec. Hist. ii. 247; Colgan's Trias Th. pp. 484, seqq.

glory. We shall thus have an opportunity of noticing many interesting particulars connected with him, which could not have been introduced before, without interrupting too much the order of the narrative; and we shall be able to discern in the memoirs of him which have been handed down to us, abundant evidences of the many graces which combined to fit him for his great undertakings. Among the ancient saints whose characters are delineated in the annals of our Irish Church, there is perhaps none to be met with so eminently holy and heavenly-minded as he was; so devout and prayerful, while at the same time so much engaged in the affairs of active life; so diligent and laborious in his employments; so influential with men of noble rank, and so gentle and condescending to those of low degree; so mortified and self-denying in his habits, and at the same time so cheerful and pleasing in his intercourse with those around him; so dead to earthly affections, and so full of spiritual life and devotedness to the service of his heavenly Master. According to the description of him given by Adamnanus,* he was "angelic in aspect, pure in conversation, holy in his employments, of excellent abilities, and eminent for wisdom," so that "although his dwelling was on earth, yet he shewed himself by his disposi-

A. D. 597.

and his
many vir-
tues.

* In Pref. 2da; Colgan's Tr. Th. p. 337; or in Canisius, lib. i. l.

A. D. 597.

His constancy in the use of prayer.

tion to be fit for the society of the inhabitants of heaven."

We need not so much wonder that the blossoms of all spiritual graces budded forth in Columba with such vigour, when we observe how constantly *prayer*, the nurse of them all, was his employment and delight. He indeed, if any one, might be truly said to pray without ceasing, and the spirit of prayer seemed to be the spirit of his life: every circumstance, every friend, every hour, gave him occasion thus to rise in spirit to his God; and he would engage in no business, undertake no work, without having first invoked His aid. Whether he went abroad, or travelled by sea or land himself,* or knew of any of his friends being thus engaged in their journeying,† or if they were sick and afflicted;‡ or when he administered to any of them counsel and advice;§ or when the ordinary mercies of this life were enjoyed by him at home; prayer was the accompaniment of all. The daily supply of milk as it passed his door,|| and the annual store of corn that lay in the granary to form a provision for the coming year,¶ were alike the subjects of a blessing: thus his food and all the creatures of God were sanctified to him by the use of prayer and thanksgiving.

* ib. ii. 12, et 34, in Colg. ii. 11, et 21, Canis.

† ib. ii. 42; Canis. ii. 29. ‡ Colg. ii. 30, 31, and 40.

§ ib. 41. || ib. 16. ¶ ib. iii. 23.

He also exhibited in his life the greatest *mortification and self-denial*, sometimes fasting for whole days and watching for whole nights; and thus, even in the winter season, while others were enjoying, after the labours of the day, the comforts of repose and slumber, he would betake himself to the church attached to his institution, for the purpose of having secret communion with God in the still and lonely hours of darkness.*

A. D. 597.
His self-
denying
habits.

"He applied himself," as his biographer Cumin remarks, "to fastings, and watchings, and prayers, meditations also upon the Scriptures, preaching of the faith, and other labours of love, with an incredibly untiring earnestness of mind."† We read also that his bed consisted of nothing more than a hide stretched out upon the bare ground, and he had, like the patriarch Jacob, a stone for his pillow. We must not however judge of such austerities by the state of things in our own day, nor suppose it extravagant conduct in a monk to act thus, at a time when the comforts of even the rich were confined perhaps to a little straw. Columba's life was indeed mortified, but not irrational: it had nothing in it of superstitious penance or unmeaning hardships: nor did he, although so severe upon himself, display any affected austerity of manner or moroseness of disposition toward his fellow men; "his countenance was

* Colgan's *Adamnanus*. iii. 19, 20.

† Tr. Th. p. 327.

A. D. 597.

still comely, his cheeks rosy, his appearance comfortable ;”* and “enjoying the affections of all around him, and constantly exhibiting in his saintly face a sweet cheerfulness of expression, he rejoiced in his inmost soul with the joy of the Holy Spirit.”†

His indefatigable industry :

especially in copying manuscripts.

His *diligence and industry* were such that he would be always engaged in doing something or other that was useful ; so that as Adamnanus tells us, “he could never allow the space of a single hour to pass in which he did not apply himself to prayer, or reading, or writing, or else some work.”‡ The transcribing of manuscripts in particular was an employment that seems to have occupied much of his time ; for we are to remember that in St. Columba's day there was no such thing as printing known, and the largest volumes in use were all written from one end to the other with a pen, nor could one have a Bible nor any other work, excepting what were so provided. The copying of books was therefore much attended to by the ancient monks, and many specimens still exist of the care and elegance with which they performed it. By such means the sacred oracles of the Word of God, as well as other valuable ancient records were preserved to us for the first fourteen centuries after the birth of Christ, printing not having been invented till

* ib.

† Adamnanus in Pref. 2da.

‡ ib.

about A.D. 1450. In Columba's history mention is made of various books written or copied by him, and as he wished to continue his usefulness in this way to the last, we find him engaged in transcribing a part of the Psalter on the very day which he knew was to close his life on earth. We read also in his life, of a *Book of Hymns for the Week*, written out with his own hand, and other works similarly produced.* Nor did he write the Bible only without making it his study also. Adamnanus indeed says, that he has "for three days and as many nights," been entirely occupied with spiritual exercises in solitary seclusion, "neither eating nor drinking," but meditating on "all the obscure and most difficult passages of Holy Scripture," &c. Whether this statement be literally true we may be inclined to doubt; there are however on record other instances in that age of such long fasting, as an accompaniment of prayer on peculiarly solemn occasions.†

A. D. 597.

His study of
the Holy
Scriptures.

His *influence* with the great and noble was such as might have been expected from his princely origin and high personal character; and kings and rulers regarded him with reverential deference; as appears from different particulars recorded in his history; in the occurrences for

His influence and
popularity.

* There is in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, a manuscript copy of the Four Gospels, which is supposed to be in his handwriting. It is said to have been completed in the space of twelve days.

† See also Acts xxvii. 33.

A. D. 597.

Prince
Domnald
brought to
receive his
blessing.

St. Colum-
ba's visit to
Clonmac-
noise.

A.D. 590.

instance which took place at the Council of Drumceat, already mentioned. It is worth noticing, also, that while he was there, young Domnald, son of the monarch Aidus, was brought to him by those who had the care of bringing him up, for the purpose of receiving a blessing from the Saint; which was cordially bestowed, and believed to have been the forerunner of much prosperity in the young prince's after life.* And while Columba was thus looked up to by the great ones of the world in his day, the humbler classes of his countrymen viewed him with no less respect and love, courting his society as a valued privilege, and greeting his presence with demonstrations of unbounded joy. In illustration of this it may suffice to mention an interesting circumstance, recorded by Adamnanus relative to a visit which St. Columba paid to the brethren belonging to the monastery of St. Kieran, of Clonmacnoise.† It was while he was staying for some months at his own monastery of Dairmagh, arranging its affairs, that he went over to spend a few days at Clonmacnoise; and "when his arrival was heard of, all the people that were in the fields near the monastery, collecting together from every side, as well as those who happened to be in the house, issue forth in all haste with one accord, and their Abbot Alitherus at their head, to meet Saint

* Colgan's *Adamnanus* i. 10. Tr. Th. p. 341. † *ib.* cap. 3. p. 340.

Columba before he could reach the gate of the monastery, receiving him as though he were an angel of the Lord; and humbly bowing their faces to the earth at the sight of him, they kissed him with all reverence, and afterwards led him with respectful treatment to their church, singing hymns and lauds as they went along:” for it seems they were desirous, before partaking of the pleasures of each others’ society, to hallow their mutual intercourse by asking a blessing from God on it in the first instance.* Adamnanus further tells us in the same place that the throng of persons crowding together to see Columba was such, that “to save the aged Saint from being inconvenienced by the pressure of the multitude,” they made a kind of seat with pieces of wood, upon which they caused him to sit, while four of their number became his bearers. This visit to Clonmacnoise is supposed to have taken place in the year 590, after the assembly at Drumceat.

A. D. 597.

We also learn from Adamnanus, that it was usual for the people in the neighbourhood of monasteries which Columba visited in this way, to testify their respect and love for him, by sending stores of provisions for his entertainment, while he remained at such places; the persons with whom he staid being probably too poor to receive him as they could wish.†

The people's attention to his wants.

* Vid. lib. ii. 36. Tr. Th. p. 358. † Lib. i. 50. p. 350.

A. D. 597.
 His great
 humility.

But through the grace given to him, Columba, although so highly exalted among men, was neither puffed up with pride, nor drawn away by worldly attractions from those better objects which chiefly occupied his thoughts. His conversation still savoured of heaven and heavenly things, and he seems to have cherished a constant longing for the coming of the day that was to separate him from earth, and remove him to be with the Lord. While his anxious efforts to benefit others, must have been rendered much more forcible and successful by the *humility* and condescending kindness which marked his behaviour towards all men. Cumin tells us that he had so learned to follow the teaching of his Blessed Master, that "he would minister to his own disciples like an humble slave, and would after their work, take off their shoes, and wash their feet in warm water. Often, too, he would take his turn at the mill, and bring the bag of meal to the kitchen on his own shoulders."*

Other interesting particulars might be easily added to those here given in illustration of St. Columba's personal character, did our space permit; but as we have been perhaps already led too far in enlarging upon such a pleasing subject, it is necessary now to think of turning our attention to other things.

* Tr. Th. p. 327.

It was by establishing the famous seminary of learning at Iona that Columba rendered the most lasting service to his country. He thus kindled a light which shone in a dark place for many ages, and like some small but brilliant star sent forth its cheering rays to enliven distant lands. Without such a provision all his personal labours might have produced but a comparatively small and temporary effect. But the supply of able and excellent men with which the Institution of Iona was furnished in its infancy, (owing, no doubt, to the great care of its founder in selecting, and his diligence in instructing, those whom he admitted among his followers,) was sufficient to acquire for it in a short time, the high character which it long maintained.

A.D. 597.
Foundation
of Iona his
most permanent benefit.

Bede, in allusion to this subject, says—"Whatever kind of person he himself was, this we know of him for certain, that he left successors distinguished for their great chastity, divine love, and strict attention to their rules of discipline; following indeed uncertain cycles in their computation of the time of the great festival,* (because far away as they were out of the world no one had supplied them with the synodal decrees relating to the Paschal observance,) yet withal diligently observing such works of piety and chastity as they

Bede's testimony to the character of St. Columba's successors.

* Easter.

A. D. 597. could find in the Prophetic, Evangelic, and Apostolic writings."*

Fortunes of
Iona in after
ages.

Iona continued for several ages to be the chief monastery of all those which belonged to the followers of Columba in Scotland and Ireland. The first check to its celebrity was the invasion of the Norwegians and Danes at the close of the eighth and beginning of the ninth century. By them it was repeatedly pillaged and burned, and its monks and abbots massacred; until at length it came along with the rest of the Western Isles to be under their settled dominion. As these barbarians held learning in no estimation, the college of Iona though it continued to exist, began to decline, and had its connection with Britain and Ireland in a great measure cut off. The venerable ruins in the island still command respect, but until of late they were much exposed to injury. About fifty years ago the Duke of Argyle, the proprietor of the island, had them enclosed with a sufficient wall; but previously to that the cathedral was sometimes used as a pen for cattle.

Historical
testimony
to Colum-
ba's labours.

Columba's extensive labours, and their widespread influence in the Church, are abundantly borne witness to by the various writers who have had occasion to make mention of him. Bede, for instance, tells us that from the two monasteries of Dearmach and Iona great numbers of others

* Hist. Ec. iii. 4.

were planted by his followers throughout Britain and Ireland. Joceline, in his *Life of St. Patrick*, calls him the founder of a hundred monasteries. A later author of Columba's own life, says that above three hundred churches and monasteries had been established by him; and the valuable ancient record called the "*Annals of Ulster*," describe him as being "next after St. Patrick the principal promoter of religion throughout the greater part of Ireland and Scotland." *

A.D. 597.

Many writers are of opinion that the successors of Columba in after ages were the same with the celebrated religious order of men called Culdees, who flourished in Ireland and Scotland in the middle ages; but there seems to be no sufficient historical testimony to prove this. The name of Culdee is not used by Adamnanus, nor Bede, nor it would appear by any writer before the tenth century: nor does it once occur in any ancient record connected with any of the Columbian monasteries. This order continued to exist until the time of Archbishop Ussher in the seventeenth century; but it was then nearly extinct, and became soon after entirely so.

Columba's followers erroneously supposed identical with the Culdees.

* A writer of much learning and research, but of apparently very whimsical wit, in the *British Magazine*, for March, 1844, endeavours to shew cause for believing the monstrous statement, that Columba was a hypocrite and an impostor, influenced by self-interest, pride, and ambition. The reader, who is curious to see what can be said on the subject, may consult the work referred to, pp. 246, seqq. Colgan, *Tr. Th.* pp. 493, 498.

BOOK II.

IRELAND EXALTED AND FLOURISHING UNDER CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE.

CHAP. I.

STATE OF THE EARLY CHURCH IN ENGLAND TO THE SAXON CONQUEST.

Before
A.D. 100.
Of the early
Church in
Great Bri-
tain.

It will be useful for us here briefly to consider the state of the Church in Great Britain at this time: a knowledge of its circumstances will help us to a clearer understanding of the condition of the Irish Church at the same period; and seeing the connection between the two, we shall be the better enabled to comprehend fully the historical notices relating to both, which it will be convenient to introduce in the following part of this work.

The Gospel
preached in
England
before
A.D. 100.

It seems almost certain, as I have already said, that the Gospel was preached in England before the end of the first century. Many indeed suppose this event to have taken place in A.D. 37, or even before that, in consequence of a

statement of Gildas, the most ancient writer who has spoken of the early state of the English Church. Cardinal Baronius, in particular, is of this mind, and in his famous Ecclesiastical "Annals," he fixes on A.D. 35 for the year when Christianity was introduced into Great Britain. The opinion however seems erroneous; it is, as our most learned authors* have shown, founded on a mistaken interpretation of the words of Gildas, and it is further at variance with the testimony of Holy Writ; for we learn from the Acts of the Apostles that Cornelius the centurion was the first Gentile to whom the Gospel was preached, about A.D. 40; and that previously to that time the Apostles did not think it lawful to preach to any but to the Jews only.

Before
A. D. 100.

There is however every reason to believe that the truths of salvation were made known in England in the apostolic age; although by whom first, it is not so easy to say. Different authors have indeed mentioned St. Peter, St. James, (the son of Zebedee,) St. Simon Zelotes, St. Aristobulus, and St. Joseph of Arimathea. But while the supposition is clearly false with regard to some of these, it has little to support it with regard to any of them. The bare asser-

Who first
preached it
there, not
known.

* Bishop Stillington's *Antiquities of the British Churches*, vol. iii. p. 2, of his works. London, 1710. Collier's *Eccles. Hist. of Great Britain*, vol. i. pp. 4, seqq. London, 1840.

Before
A. D. 100.

tion of an author coming some centuries after, being no satisfactory evidence in this matter, and as Fuller says, in his Church History of Britain, "how easy it is for a writer, with one word of his pen, to send an apostle many miles by land and leagues by sea, into a country wherein otherwise he had no footing." In behalf of the claims of Joseph of Arimathea, much has been said; but after all, the foundation on which they rest appears not much more satisfactory than what the others have to depend on. The tradition about St. Joseph is that he sailed from Judea to Marseilles in France, then crossed over by land to England to preach the Gospel; and that he founded, in A.D. 64, the church of Glastonbury, which would according to this account be the most ancient in the world. But the best judges are inclined to believe that St. Paul is more likely than any of those yet mentioned to have been the apostle of Britain. Many circumstances concur to make this appear by no means improbable: for these particulars however I must refer my readers to those authors who have treated more at large of this subject.*

St. Paul
probably
the first herald
of the
faith in
Britain.

A.D. 100.
Conversion
of King
Lucius to
Christianity;
A. D. 167?

The most important circumstance connected with the history of religion in England in the *second* century is the conversion of Lucius, a

* Stillingeet and Collier, as above quoted.

British king. They who have written the history of this century, however agreeing as to the fact, are very much divided as to the time when it took place, assigning various dates, differing by nearly a century. The Venerable Bede gives A.D. 167 as the year; some make it so late as 190. The want of harmony about this point is not so much to be wondered at, when we consider that early authors not following any settled system of chronology, did each one for himself, as well as he could calculate it, mark the time from the birth of our Lord; and thus, although starting from the same place, they seldom meet together in their dating of any memorable incident. Lucius is said to have been converted by the miracles wrought by Christian teachers; and to have sent Elvanus and Medwinus, two persons of known piety and learning in the Scriptures, to Eleutherius, bishop of Rome, desiring instruction in the Christian faith. Britain was at this time governed by the Romans, whose armies had conquered the isle; and King Lucius may easily have heard from their generals, in his own country, somewhat of the city which was then the capital of the world, and of the state of Christianity in it; so that it might as naturally occur to him at that day to send to Rome for Christian teachers, as it would to an Indian prince at this day to apply to England

A. D. 100.

and his
message to
Pope Eleu-
therius.

A.D. 100.

for the like aid. Eleutherius readily complied with his request, and sent two grave divines to gratify his desire, by whom Lucius was soon baptized, and many of his subjects.* He afterwards became a great patron of the religion which he had embraced, building, as we are informed, and endowing many churches in various parts of England, among which are enumerated those founded at London, Gloucester, Winchester, &c.

A.D. 200.
State of the
British
Church in
the third
century.

Of Christianity in England in the *third* century we know very little; only that at the commencement of it King Lucius died, and that the religion which he had promoted in his country remained there after him. Gildas, writing A.D. 540, says, "Christ's precepts, though they were but luke-warmly received by the inhabitants, did yet remain with some entirely, less sincerely with others, even until the nine years of persecution under Dioclesian."† Origen too, who wrote about A.D. 234, says, "The power of God our Saviour is even with them who are in Britain, shut out from our world."‡ And Tertulian, who flourished also in this century, speaks of "places of the British Isles, inaccessible to the Romans, but which had become subject to the dominion of Christ."§

* Collier's Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 39.

† ib. p. 27.

‡ In his Sixth Homily upon the first chapter of St. Luke. See also his Fourth Homily upon Ezekiel.

§ Lib. advers. Judæos, c. 7, p. 139, of Paris ed. 1608.

The persecution under the Roman Emperor Dioclesian, which afflicted the Christian Church at the commencement of the *fourth* century, extended even to Britain; and we read of many martyrs there in this age. The most noble in this noble army was Alban, a wealthy inhabitant of Verulam, who is regarded as the British protomartyr—first in point of time, and first in the celebrity of his martyrdom. He was converted by a Christian confessor, who fleeing from persecution elsewhere, came to Verulam, and was sheltered and entertained by Alban at his house there. A search being made for his guest soon after by the Pagan officers, Alban having persuaded him to exchange clothes with himself, thus enabled him to escape, and meanwhile gave up himself in his place to those relentless enemies. St. Alban was soon visited with death, after many varied tortures from his Heathen persecutors. The person who had been the means of his conversion, (who is by some writers called St. Amphibalus,) was soon after apprehended and visited with a similar fate; and thousands besides, some of whose names are preserved, perished about this time in the same way.* At this time, Gildas says, the Churches were demolished throughout the whole empire; the Holy Scriptures searched for and burnt in the streets, and the priests and people

A.D. 300.

The Dioclesian persecution, and martyrdom of St. Alban.

About
A.D. 303.

* Collier's Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 55.

A. D. 303.

End of the
Dioclesian
persecution,
A.D. 305.

Foreign
Councils
attended in
this age by
British
bishops.

Spread of
Arianism
and Pela-
gianism in
Britain.

dragged to the shambles and butchered like sheep; insomuch, that in some provinces there was scarcely any remains of Christianity.* Such a miserable state of things continued for somewhat less than two years, for Constantius Chlorus succeeding to the dominion in the western parts of the Roman empire, France, Spain, and Britain, brought peace and toleration to the British Christians, in A.D. 305. He is said to have died at York, and was succeeded by Constantine the Great, who established the Christian religion in all the Roman empire.

It appears that during this century many foreign councils were attended by British bishops. That of Arles, in France, for instance, held in A.D. 314, to settle the Donatist controversy; to which went three bishops, a priest, and deacon, whose names are given us, as representatives of the British Church on that occasion. The Council of Sardica, A.D. 347, and that of Ariminum, A.D. 359, were attended by bishops from Britain. At the latter, especially, several were present. It is also believed that some of them attended the famous Council of Nice, in A.D. 325.†

Arianism began to infect the British Church about A.D. 383.‡ It was to some degree suppressed at the commencement of the *fifth* cen-

* Quoted *ib.* p. 47.

† For the authorities, see Collier, pp. 59, 65, 85.

‡ *ib.* vol. i. p. 88.

tury, when a new error arose and prevailed to a still more lamentable degree. The author of the Pelagian heresy is believed to have been a Briton by birth: and the time when he began to cause trouble in the Church was about the year 405.*

A.D. 400.

The principal of his erroneous doctrines was this—that infants are born into this world such as Adam was before the fall, free from original sin, and capable of being saved without God's grace, by their own merits and free will. Though Pelagius did not himself, as far as we knew, preach his errors in Great Britain, yet they were widely circulated there, and adopted by great numbers. In consequence of which the British bishops invited from France, Germanus bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus bishop of Troyes, to assist in confuting the heresy and checking its growth. The efforts of these holy men were blessed with much success, and their appeals to Holy Scripture were so forcible and overcoming, that their opponents were altogether obliged to yield to them.†

Pelagianism
combated
by Germanus
and
Lupus,
A.D. 429.

When however Germanus and Lupus had departed, Pelagianism began to spread in Britain afresh; and therefore having been solicited to return thither again, Germanus came over once more accompanied by Severus, bishop of Treves; and succeeded a second time in crushing error,

Second visit
of Germanus
to Britain,
A.D. 449.

* ib. p. 94.

† ib. 98, 102.

A. D. 449.

and confirming the professors of the orthodox faith. We are further informed that these French bishops, Germanus and his associates, helped to arrange other matters of importance connected with the British Church; and in particular that they effected the establishment of schools of learning in the country; and introduced there also the use of the Gallican liturgy. This is stated in an ancient MS. of the Cotton Library already quoted.*

Story of the
defeat of
the Saxon
army by
Germanus,
A.D. 429.

But a heavier blow was about this time given to British Christianity by the invasion of the Heathen Saxons, whose dominion in England was first established in this century. The Picts and Scots had much harassed the southern parts of the island with their invasions, and had been repulsed about A.D. 380, by the aid of the Romans, under their general Maximus. Maximus however having departed for Italy some years after, these invaders returned: and we read of Germanus, in A.D. 429, after his defeat of the Pelagians, being employed in expelling the Picts, and with them the Saxons, then first beginning to invade Britain, out of that country; which Germanus is said to have done by causing a multitude of his disciples and converts to lie in wait in ambush near the Pagan army, and on a signal given to shout lustily "hallelujah" three times.† The

* Collier, vol. i. pp. 111. 112, &c.

† See 2 Chronicles, xx. 22.

noise of their shouting, re-echoed and multiplied by the adjoining hills and valleys, is said to have struck such a panic into the enemies, that they fled from the place in confusion and disorder, and were quite discomfited, many of them in their flight perishing in the river Allen in Flintshire, which lay in their way.

A. D. 429.

The incursions of the Picts however continued after this, and the Britons applied in vain to their masters, the Romans, for aid against the enemy. The Roman empire was indeed at this time in such a state of decline and decay, that it was impossible to preserve its outposts, the parts nearer home giving trouble enough to keep them in order. In this difficulty the British being reduced to desperation, Vortigern their king invited the Pagan Saxons from Germany, to assist him, under their leaders, Hengist and Horsa.* They readily came as invited, but it was not long ere they began to set their eyes on the conquest of the country which they were called over to deliver from other enemies; and turning against the Britons the power which they had established among them, these foreigners dispossessed them by degrees of the best parts of their island. In the territory thus acquired, the Saxons founded seven kingdoms, which together formed what is called the "Heptarchy," that is, the *sevenfold*

The Saxons' first settlement in Britain.
A. D. 450.

Foundation of the Saxon Heptarchy.

* Collier, Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 120.

A.D. 429.

government ; and as they had not yet received the faith, this wide extent of country, comprehending somewhat more than a third of the entire island, became again, under their influence, over-spread with the gloom of Paganism. The British Church was driven into the fastnesses of the island, which were less accessible to the Saxon invaders ; and Wales especially afforded it a place of shelter. In that country, which then included the part of England now called Cornwall, Christianity still prevailed and kept its ground : but in the eastern part of the isle the profession of the Gospel was almost, if not wholly, obliterated. British Christians were supplanted by Saxon idolaters, and the conversion of the nation which had been begun and carried on with so much attendant success, was for a time checked and thrown back, and Heathenism and Satan allowed to rule once more. The several kingdoms of the Heptarchy, with the dates of their establishment, were respectively as follows : the kingdom of Kent was set up in A.D. 457 : that of the South Saxons, in 491 : West Saxons, 519 : East Saxons, 527 : Northumberland, 547 : East Angles, 575 : and Mercia, 582.

CHAP. II.

STATE OF THE BRITISH CHURCH AFTER THE SAXON INVASION—
CONVERSION OF THE SAXONS, AND ORIGIN OF THE ANGLO-ROMAN
CHURCH IN BRITAIN.

THUS successful had the Saxons been in destroying the Christian faith in a great part of England, and no doubt many of the British Christians at this time suffered for their profession of the Gospel. As an instance we read that Cerdicus, first King of the West Saxons, (Devonshire, Hampshire, &c.) having overcome the Britons at Winchester, killed all the monks belonging to the Church of St. Amphibalus, and turned the same into a temple of idolatry, A.D. 495.

Cruelty of
the Saxons,
A.D. 495.

That both the Church and state of Britain must have been in a very miserable condition at the period of the Saxon invasion, is sufficiently evident from the statements of Gildas, a writer who flourished soon after their first settlement in the country. He wrote a short work on the troubles of Britain, complaining bitterly of the corruptions and vices prevalent among the people, which were such, he says, as naturally drew down upon them the divine judgments. For though professedly Christians, yet "they were addicted to all the

Gildas's ac-
count of
the state of
Britain at
this time.
A.D. 540.

A. D. 540.

vices which are incident to human nature;" among which he notes in particular, their licentiousness and profligacy, "hatred of the truth, and of those who maintained it, love of lies, and of such as propagated them, putting good for evil, honouring vice as virtue, preferring darkness to day, and regarding Satan as an angel of light."* He adds, that they deposed and murdered their kings at pleasure, substituting always others who were still more vicious than the last. Such is his description of the people: and the clergy by his account were no better, being drunkards, quarrelsome and envious of one another, and putting no difference between good and evil. This was the state of things among the Britons, according to Gildas, before the invitation of the Saxons into the island by Vortigern. Elsewhere† the same writer is still more severe upon the British clergy of his own time, calling them impudent, crafty, soul-murderers; who attended the churches for filthy lucre's sake; shewed more anxiety about ecclesiastical preferments than about the kingdom of heaven; made purchase of the sacred office; and were guilty of many other enormities, upon which Gildas enlarges so much, that what we here give is but a very small sample of his severe censure.

Britain not
without

We must not however suppose, that all was

* Gildas, Hist. cap. xix. p. 14. apud Gale, Scriptores xv. Oxon. 1691.

† In Epist. p. 31, apud Gale.

darkness and vice in Britain throughout the sixth century : on the contrary, Gildas himself admits that amid the general prevalence of irreligion, there were to be found some bright exceptions : and many eminent persons adorned during this period, the Christian profession, whose names are handed down to us with honourable mention of their learning, piety, and zeal for good works. It is desirable that we should introduce here brief notices of a few of the principal of these ancient British saints, as the history of some of them is a good deal connected with that of the Irish Church at the same period.

A. D. 540.
some bright
lights in the
sixth cen-
tury.

The two that come first in order of time, are Dubricius and Illutus, who are both said to have been disciples of St. Germanus. This prelate, we are told, and his friend Lupus, "having suppressed the Pelagian heresy, consecrated bishops in several parts of Britain, and among the rest, they erected a cathedral at Landaff, and made Dubricius archbishop, who fixed his disciples in several churches : for this purpose he made Daniel bishop of Bangor, and disposed of Illutus to a place, from him called Lan Illut (Lantuit,) or the Church of Illutus." Before Dubricius was raised to so high a station, he, and Illutus also, had been employed in the instruction of youth, and a great number of scholars from all parts of Britain resorted to him for instruction. The conjecture

Account of
Dubricius
and Illu-
tus.

A. D. 540.

seems a very probable one, that when St. Germanus found how the general ignorance existing in the country was helping to promote Pelagianism, and injuring the Christian cause; he appointed Dubricius and Ilutus to undertake the education of the clergy, in order to provide men more competent and better qualified for the sacred office. Dubricius was afterwards archbishop of Caerleon, which dignity he retained until old age induced him to resign it to his pupil, St. David. He died in A.D. 522, according to the most credible account.*

Of David,
Gildas, and
Cadoc.

In the history of St. Finnian of Clonard, we read,† that when travelling abroad in the earlier part of his life, he crossed the Irish sea, and came to Kill-muine (i.e. Menevia, or St. David's) in Britain, and had intercourse there with the holy men, David, Gildas, and Cathmael, *alias* Cadoc. After spending some years in that country, he returned home, accompanied, it is said, by some religious Britons, who had become very much attached to him.‡ Now, the three persons above named in connection with St. Finnian are the very same that were already mentioned in the ancient catalogue of Irish saints, from Archbishop Ussher;|| for there can be hardly any doubt, but that the Docus of that catalogue is the same per-

* Collier's Ch. Hist. of England, vol. i. pp. 111, 136.

† Lanigan's Ecol. Hist. i. 464.

‡ ib.

|| vid. p. 61.

son with the Cadoc here mentioned.* And since their names are thus connected with Irish affairs, and as they are besides among the most eminent of their day in their own nation, they shall be the next to come under our notice in this place.

A. D. 540.

And first of David. The chronology of his life is most uncertain, but it appears that he was born in the latter end of the fifth century. His father was a Welsh prince, but by the mother's side he was of Irish descent, as it is said that she was daughter of the Irish prince Breacan, who had settled in Wales, in the district called from him Brecknock. St. David was eminently distinguished for his learning, eloquence, and austere piety. Having been promoted to the bishopric of Caerleon, about A.D. 540, he removed the see to Menevia, which was afterwards called from him, St. David's; his relation, King Arthur, consenting to the change.†

Account of
St. David,
made bi-
shop of Ca-
erleon,
about
A.D. 540.

The history of Gildas is extremely confused, some authors affirming that there were two eminent persons of the name, (the elder being sur-named Albanus, and the younger Badonicus,) while others, with more reason, are of opinion, that both these were identical, and that it is only the history of one person that has been split into two, that has given occasion to the former opinion. Gildas was born, it appears, in or about the year

History of
Gildas.
He died,
A.D. 570.

* Lanigan, i. 490.

† ib. 469, and Collier, i. 136.

A. D. 540.

He visits
Ireland for
study and
improvement.

490, and was called *Badonicus* from *Badon* or *Bath*, not that he was a native of that place, but because he was born in the year of the famous battle of *Bath*, in which the Britons defeated the Saxons.* His father was prince of a territory called *Alclud*, near the *Clyde*, in North Britain. In very early youth he studied under *Iltutus*; with whom he continued for some years: and when he had learned all that his master could impart of human learning, and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, he came to Ireland for the purpose of seeking further improvement in the same studies,† and having there attended several schools, he thus became “eminently qualified for preaching the Word of God.”‡ He returned to Britain about A.D. 517; and after this spent one year teaching in the school of *Cadoc* of *Lancarvan*. It was several years after his return from Ireland that he wrote those tracts of his which are still extant. It is said that while in Ireland he was employed for some time as a teacher in the school of *Armagh*: and also that he assisted in arranging liturgical and other ecclesiastical affairs in this island. His death is assigned to the year 570.¶

Concerning
Cadoc, or
Docus, who
died,
A.D. 570.

The third eminent Briton above-mentioned is *Cadocus* or *Docus*; as he appears to have been called by both those names, the latter however occurring only in some Irish documents. He was

* *Lanigan*, i. 476. † *ib.* 477. ‡ *ib.* ¶ *ib.* i. 478, and *Collier*, i. 144.

a cousin of St. David, as their mothers were both daughters of the same Irish prince, Breacan, already mentioned. He was born in the latter end of the fifth century, and was the son of a British prince. When a boy he was entrusted to the care of an Irishman, named Thaddeus, who kept a school of some note at Caerwent, in Monmouthshire: and when he had been sufficiently instructed by him, he went into the district of Glamorgan, and established there a religious house, since called the monastery of Lancarvan, near the Severn. Although founder and abbot of a monastic institution, he did not think it expedient to renounce all the advantages of his birth, but reserved in his own hands the management of his patrimonial estates, with which he is said to have supported three hundred clergymen and poor people, in addition to the constant hospitality of his own table. He died in the same year as Gildas, viz., A.D. 570.*

A. D. 540.

In addition to the account here given of David, Gildas, and Cadoc, we may remark, in the words of Dr. Lanigan,† “that in those times, and for several years previous, a great intercourse was kept up between the religious persons of Ireland and those of both Great Britain and Brittany; so that, while Irishmen repaired to either of the latter countries, many pious Britons used to spend

Further instances of the intimacy between the British and Irish Christians of the sixth century.

* Lanigan i. 489, and Collier i. 138.

† ib. i. 492.

A. D. 540.
St. Paternus.

Petranus.

St. Petroc.

St. Aedan,
or Maidoc,
of Ferns.

Such instances very
numerous.

a great part of their time in Ireland." Thus the celebrated St. Paternus, whose family were of Armorica or French Britain, came into Ireland, and lived there in retirement for some time, seeking religious improvement and opportunity of studying in quiet. He afterwards went to Wales, and took up his residence in Cardiganshire: and finally, when he had done much service to the Christian cause in that country, he left it and settled in Armorica among his kindred, where his memory was long held in much veneration.* Before him his father also, who was named Petranus, a nobleman of Brittany, came to Ireland about the beginning of the sixth century, and led there a very devout life. In like manner, St. Petroc, or Petrocus, from whom Petrocstow, (now *Padstow*,) in Cornwall, derived its name, left his own country in the same age, and "spent twenty years in Ireland, applying himself to the study of the Scriptures, and to the acquirement of general knowledge."† The famous St. Aedan also, (or Maidoc, as he is otherwise called) who founded the see and city of Ferns, studied for a long time at Menevia with St. David, and was much esteemed among the Britons in that place. St. Aedan was born about A.D. 560, and died in 632.‡ These are but a few instances out of many that

* Lanigan *ib.* and Collier i. 138. † Lanigan, *ib.* and Collier, p. 139.

‡ Lanigan, *ib.* 333, 339.

might be adduced to shew what a familiarity existed at this period between the Irish and British Christians, and how many were the mutual benefits which they conferred upon one another, in the way of communicating and receiving religious instruction and assistance in their studies. The reader may observe some other illustrations of the same circumstance in the former book of this work, (ch. viii.)* The places which were most distinguished at this time among the Britons as schools of learning and seminaries of the Christian religion were, Bangor in the northern part of Wales, and Caerleon in the south, upon the river Usk: the latter is said to have been an archbishop's see, and to have had in it a college of two hundred philosophers.

A. D. 540.

The preceding details will give the reader some idea of the religious state of the Britons during the troubles consequent upon the Saxon invasion: but now, to turn to the Saxons themselves, who had established their kingdoms in the country, they were soon to be converted to the faith they had done so much to destroy. The circumstances connected with their conversion are well known to every person who has read the smallest English History in use among us. For Gregory, afterwards known as Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome, seeing certain Saxon

Occasion of
the conversion
of the
Saxons,
A.D. 595.

* Vid. pp. 69, 71, 73.

A. D. 595.

Mission of
Augustine.
A. D. 596.

children exposed for sale in the market-place at Rome, was at first struck with their beauty, and then on making inquiries concerning them, was much moved with compassion for the spiritual destitution of the country from which they came. He therefore became desirous to come and preach to the Saxons himself, but was prevented by Pelagius,* who was at that time pope, and by the people of Rome, as they were unwilling to expose a life so precious to so many dangers as would attend this mission. Gregory was soon after made bishop of Rome: and not forgetting in that high station the object which had so much interested him, he still manifested a pious zeal for the conversion of the Heathen Saxons in Britain; but being unable now to go and engage in such a work himself, he persuaded a monk, named Augustine, to undertake it, assisted by forty companions. By their means Ethelbert king of Kent, was converted to the Christian faith, A.D. 597, the year after their arrival; and before the end of the sixth century all Kent was brought to embrace the profession of the Gospel. Augustine received from Gregory an archbishop's pall for his services, and was appointed to the see of Canterbury, then converted into an archbishopric. He continued his pious labours with much success till

* Not the Pelagius mentioned in page 115.

about A.D. 604, when he died. Kent, Essex, and other parts of the Saxon dominions had been converted before his death; and subsequently the remaining parts, Northumberland, East Anglia, the West Saxons, Mercia, and the South Saxons, were one after another brought over to Christianity, which was thus received by the entire Heptarchy, in A.D. 681.

A.D. 604.

Augustine has been regarded as the apostle of the English; and the name may be allowed to be justly his, if we understand by it that he was the first missionary to the *Saxons* who had settled themselves in England, and the chief propagator of the Christian religion among the people of an important portion of the Heptarchy. But we must not in giving him such a title be supposed to imply that he was the first planter of Christianity in England; or to forget that before his time all the world had heard of the British Church, with its bishops stationed in the different provinces of the island. This venerable body was indeed in Augustine's time very much reduced, and by persecution driven into Wales, and confined within the narrow limits of that province; but it still lived there, and even flourished, continuing to be the representative and successor of that original and ancient Church, which had existed in Britain from the apostolic age, or in other words, nearly five

Augustine,
in what
sense the
apostle of
the English.

A.D. 604.

The *English*
and *British*
Churches
distinct.

hundred years before the missionaries from Pope Gregory set foot in that country.

By the conversion of the Saxons there came to be formed in Britain a new Christian body, quite distinct from that which had previously existed there, and altogether independent of it in its origin. There was, as Bede expresses it, "a new Church collected out of the *English* people."* This newly-formed body held in the main the same doctrines with those received by the ancient *British* Christians: but there were certain distinctions between the two parties which it is of importance that we should notice here, as they became afterwards the source of much controversy, and of serious discords.

Augustine's
first conference
with
the *British*
bishops.
A.D. 601.

The ancient *British* Church had no doubt maintained in the earliest times such a friendly intercourse with the Church of Rome as circumstances would permit. This intercourse however would naturally have been much interrupted by the troubles connected with the Saxon invasion, during the wars of which, the *British*, driven into Wales, and shut up there by their enemies, could have little communication with any Christians in other countries, excepting Ireland. And therefore when Augustine, at an early stage of his labours, had with the assistance of King Ethelbert, persuaded the *British* bishops to come

* Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. cap. 4.

and hold a conference with him, to consider matters relating to their mutual interests, and the intercourse which was to exist between them, they were at first at a loss in what light to regard him. After some discussion, however, as to the points on which they disagreed, such as the time of keeping Easter, &c., a real or supposed miracle which Augustine wrought in their presence, had the effect of convincing them that it was the "true way of righteousness" which he taught. Unwilling, however, to give up those customs of their own which he condemned, "without the consent and license of their own people," they agreed to meet him again at a second conference.

A.D. 601.

Augustine's proposal was, that the British bishops "should live on terms of Catholic peace with him, and that they should undertake together for their Lord, the work of preaching the Gospel to the Heathen," (i.e. to the Saxon tribes in Britain;) and what was very important, he also desired much to induce them to submit to his jurisdiction, and allow him to have authority over them in spiritual matters, according to the letters of advice for the regulation of his missionary labours, which he had received from Rome. In one of these letters we find Pope Gregory describing to him the model by which he was to arrange the frame-work of ecclesias-

Nature of
the demands
made by
Augustine.

A.D. 601.

tical authority in the Church of England: the bishops of London and York are first assigned their respective places and privileges; and then Augustine is informed that he himself, as archbishop of Canterbury, is to "have subject to him,"* not only all the bishops whom he and the bishop of York might ordain, but also "all the priests of Britain." "We commit to thee, brother," said Gregory to him in another letter, "all the bishops of the British Isles, that the ignorant may be instructed, the weak in faith strengthened, the unruly corrected by your authority."†

What course
the British
bishops adopted in
this matter.

Now the British bishops had considered themselves as entirely independent of any foreign control in ecclesiastical affairs, and as being fully competent to govern their own Church, without having any Augustine to instruct or correct them; and therefore it was not natural for them to submit thus to his jurisdiction, without very serious consideration of the matter beforehand. In order therefore to be the better advised as to the manner in which they should receive his proposals at the second conference, they applied previously for counsel on this matter, to an aged man of their nation, who had a great character among them for soundness of judgment and holiness of life. His advice to them was, that Augustine, if he were a man of God, ought to

* Bede, *Hist. Ec.* i. 29.† *ib.* i. 27.

be followed; and that whether he were really so or not, might be known from observing his air and demeanour. "We know," said this old counsellor, "that the Lord saith, *Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.* (St. Matt. xi. 29.) If then Augustine be mild and humble in heart, it is credible that he himself beareth the yoke of Christ, and proposeth the same to be borne by you; but if he be cruel and proud, it appeareth that he is not of God, neither ought ye to give heed to what he saith."*

A. D. 601.

The advice given by their aged counsellor;

In compliance with this advice, it was arranged, by the old man's suggestion, that at the second conference, Augustine should be allowed to enter the place of meeting first; and that then, if he rose from his seat on the entrance of the British bishops, they should hear him obediently, regarding him as Christ's servant; but if he were to slight them by remaining sitting, they also should in that case pay little attention to him. Accordingly when the time of meeting had arrived, and the British bishops drew near, Augustine continued sitting in his chair as they approached, and they felt themselves affronted, and acted on the feeling.

and its result.

At this second conference, Augustine "addressed them thus—'Forasmuch as ye are in

Augustine's proposition at the second meeting.

* ib. ii. 2.

A. D. 601.

The Britons
contrary to
the Romans
in Church
rites, &c.

Augustine's
threat a-
gainst the
Britons.

the habit of doing many things contrary to our practice, nay to the practice of the universal Church, yet if you will submit to me in these three things, viz., to celebrate Easter at the right time; to perform the office of baptism, by which we are born anew unto God, according to the method used by the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church; and to unite with us in preaching the word of God to the English people, all the rest of your practices, though they be contrary to our ways, we shall yet endure patiently.' But they said they would do none of these things, nor have him for their archbishop; remarking to one another, 'that if he would not rise to us just now, how much more will he view us with utter contempt ere long, if we shall begin to be under his jurisdiction.'**

Upon this Augustine, indignant at the untractableness of these bishops, had recourse to menaces, telling them that since they would not join with him in preaching to the Saxons, they should ere long feel the power of their swords; which accordingly came to pass. For some time after, Ethelfrid, the Pagan King of Northumberland, invaded Wales, and caused a great slaughter there; putting to the sword, among the rest, twelve hundred monks of Bangor in cold blood. Some authors have suspected that

* Bede, lib. ii. 2.

Augustine himself was the instigator of this wickedness, but such a supposition seems altogether improbable, and without any sufficient historic foundation. A.D. 601.

The conference here mentioned took place in A.D. 601. The result of it was of much importance, as laying the foundation of those long-continued divisions which afterwards prevailed between the British and English or Anglo-Saxon Christians. It might have been hoped that when the Saxon invaders became converts to the Christian faith, much of that enmity would have died away, which had existed in the minds of the native Britons against a race that had inflicted so much misery on their country: it might have been expected that when the tie of a common religion came to exist, the old animosities which divided the two nations would have been greatly forgotten, and that they would have been made "one in Christ." Such however was not the case; only the quarrels between the Saxon and British *nations* were succeeded by contentions between the Saxon *Church* and the *Church* of the British and Irish Christians. The former of these parties meanwhile kept up the closest intimacy and communion with the See of Rome, from which all their ecclesiastical authority was derived; while the British and Irish Christians on the contrary were so far from admitting any

Of the obstinate quarrels which ensued, between the Britons and the Roman (or Saxon) Christians.

A. D. 601.

of that superiority in the Roman Church, which the others acknowledged, that they were quite separated from her communion, and made little of her judgment in controverted matters which they thought of prime importance. But of the disputes between the British Churches and the Church of Rome, we shall have to speak more particularly in the next sections.

CHAP. III.

OF THE DISUNION WHICH PREVAILED BETWEEN THE EARLY BRITISH
AND IRISH CHRISTIANS, AND THE CHURCH OF ROME.

The Irish
bishops all
Schismatics
in A.D. 566,
according
to Baronius.

IF any of my readers be simple enough to imagine that in these early times which we have been considering, our Irish forefathers ever cherished towards the Church of Rome, that extravagant reverence for her authority and blind submission to her dictates, which some of this day would consider worthy of all good Catholics, I can perhaps suggest to such an one no better consideration for arresting his attention in favor of what may be said on the other side, and helping to correct his error, than the statement of Cardinal Baronius, (in his famous "*Ecclesiastical Annals*,") that for the latter half of the sixth century, "*the bishops of Ireland were ALL SCHISMATICS, separated from the Church of Rome,*" and in close

alliance with her enemies.* Whatever view be taken of Baronius's judgment in the matter, this much at least is clear enough, that he was very far from entertaining the same opinion as that commonly held by Irish members of the Church of Rome, concerning the state of religion in this country in ancient times : and the latter persons can hardly fail to be struck with the strange circumstance, that one of the most eminent and famous writers of their Church, in one of the most remarkable Church Histories in existence, should thus plainly indicate, how very little conscious the court of Rome itself is, of having always possessed that strong hold on the affections of the Irish people, and that devoted loyalty on their part to its own sovereignty, which so many fancy to have existed always from the beginning.

A. D. 566.

But, whether the popular feeling of hostility to the Church of Rome, which was manifested by the Irish Christians, took its rise so early as Cardinal Baronius thinks, (i.e. in A.D. 566, the year after St. Columbkille began to preach in Scotland,) or at a later period, and nearer to the time of the dispute between Augustine and the British bishops ; it is easy enough to sketch the history of the contest with sufficient clearness from the earliest part of the seventh century.

History of the dispute from the beginning of the seventh century.

* Ad ann. 566, 604. See Appendix, No. I.

A. D. 604.

Laurentius, archbishop of Canterbury, writes to the Irish about their differences with Rome, A.D. 609.

The death of Archbishop Augustine is supposed to have taken place in A.D. 604,* when he was succeeded in the see of Canterbury by one of his companions named Laurentius. This prelate, Bede informs us, "did not only attend to the charge of the new Church that was gathered from the English people, but also regarded with pastoral solicitude the old natives of Britain, and likewise the Scottish [i.e. Irish] tribes which inhabit the island of Ireland adjoining to Britain. For observing that the practice and sentiments of the Scots in their own country here mentioned, and also those of the Britons in Britain itself, were contrary to Church order in many things, (particularly because they used not to celebrate the solemnity of Easter at the proper time, but supposed, as we have shewn above, that the day to be observed in commemoration of the Lord's resurrection was included in the week from the fourteenth to the twentieth day of the moon,) he wrote them, in conjunction with his fellow-bishops, a letter of exhortation, beseeching and entreating them to keep the bond of peace and Catholic observances with that Church of Christ which is extended all over the world. The beginning of his letter is here given:—

Extract from his letter to them.

"To our Lords and most dear brethren the bishops or abbots throughout all Scotland, [i.e.

* Collier, Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 183.

Ireland,] Laurentius, Mellitus, and Justus, bishops, the servants of the servants of God. When the Apostolic See, according to her practice in all the world, stationed us in these western parts to preach to the Pagan nations here, and so it came to pass that we entered into this island, which is called Britain, before we were acquainted with it: supposing that they walked in the ways of the universal Church, we felt a very high respect for the Britons as well as the Scots, from our regard to their sanctity of character: but when we came to know the Britons, we supposed the Scots must be superior to them. However we have learned from Bishop Daganus coming into this island which we have mentioned above, [i.e. Britain,] and Abbot Columbanus coming into France, that the Scots [i.e. the Irish] differ not at all from the Britons in their habits. For Bishop Daganus when he came to us would not take meat with us, no, not so much as in the same lodging where we were eating.'

A. D. 609.

An Irish bishop refuses to eat in the house with a Roman archbishop.

"The same Laurentius with his fellow-bishops, sent to the priests of the Britons also, a letter worthy of his high station; in which he exerts himself to persuade them to Catholic unity; but how much he gained by these efforts, the state of things to the present day [A.D. 731,] sufficiently shews."*

Ill success of the efforts of Laurentius.

* Hist. Ecol. lib. ii. cap. 4.

A. D. 609.

The British Church at this period altogether independent of Rome.

By the letter of Laurentius, of which a part is here given, "it appears," as Collier observes,* "that the bishops of Rome did not intermeddle with the government of the British Churches; for if they had, Laurentius, and the rest of the missionaries, could not have been such strangers to the condition and usages of the British Churches, as to believe them conformable to the Roman, till they came hither, and found it otherwise. It is plain, therefore, the British Christians had the spiritual sovereignty within themselves, were under no foreign superintendency, nor used to apply to the See of Rome, to pay their homage to the pope's primacy, to get their metropolitans consecrated, or receive directions for discipline or government from thence; and which is more, neither were they declared schismatics for want of this deference and application: for had they lain under this censure at Rome, Laurentius would never have had so good an opinion of them at his first coming hither, nor presumed so strongly upon their conformity."

This independence not a mere accident arising from the Saxon wars.

It is true, that the Saxon wars had a good deal interrupted the intercourse of the British Christians with the Roman and other foreign Churches; but yet, not so completely as to have rendered all communication impossible, if the superintendence and counsel of the See of Rome had been

* *ib.* p. 187.

judged to be of that essential importance that was afterwards supposed. And even if the interruption of mutual intercourse had been complete and entire from the first invasion of the Saxons to the arrival of the Roman missionaries, we should still have sufficient evidence that the doctrines of the supremacy of the Roman See, and of the necessity of communion with it in order to salvation, were not held by the most ancient Christians of these islands: for had they entertained such views of the Church of Rome, they would never have behaved as they did towards the pope's own missionary, Augustine, nor would they have thought so lightly of resisting his authority; nor would an Irish bishop have refused to eat in the same house with the archbishop of Canterbury for no other reason than that he belonged to the Roman communion. And it is plain from the letter of Laurentius, that this was no mere private feeling of Daganus's, but that there was, on the contrary, reason to believe, that any other of the Irish bishops in general would have acted in the same way.

A. D. 609.

It is important that the reader should carefully bear in mind in this part of our history, the remark already made (p. 5) upon the ancient names of Ireland and Scotland: so as to remember, that in the times of which we now speak, the Irish people were commonly known by the name of

"The Scots"
a name properly belonging to the Irish at this time.

A. D. 620.

Scots or Scottish, and their country by the name of Scotia or Scotland, as well as Hibernia or Ireland: the people of the country now called Scotland being then designated Albanians, Picts, &c. Bede says of Ireland, "This is properly speaking, the country of the Scots: emigrating from this, they added in Britain a third nation to the Britons and Picts," already settled there.* This use of the names continued, as already observed, until very long after Bede's time, and is admitted generally by all writers on the subject of our ancient history. But to resume our narrative.

Taliessin's
verses
against the
Roman
preachers,
A. D. 620.

The state of feeling among the British on the point of their connection with the Roman preachers of those times, with which we are at present occupied, is curiously illustrated by the following stanza, translated from the Welch of Taliessin, a poet, styled by the Britons, "chief of the bards," who wrote about A. D. 620, though some think earlier. (The lines are taken from the *Chronicle of Wales*, quoted by Archbishop Ussher, in his *Religion of the Ancient Irish*):†—

"Woe be to that priest yborn,
That will not cleanly weed his corn,
And preach his charge among:
Woe be to that shepherd I say,
That will not watch his fold alway,
As to his office doth belong.
Woe be to him that doth not keep
From Romish wolves his sheep,
With staff and weapon strong."

* Hist. Eccl. i. p. 1.

† Chap. x.

Although these verses express *directly* the feelings of the *Britons*, rather than those of the *Irish*, yet, when we remember what a familiarity and close intimacy existed between both at this time, and especially when we consider how entirely they agreed with each other, and differed from the Romans and other Christians, concerning the matter of Easter, which was so hotly disputed in their age, we may easily see that any thing stated of the one people with respect to this quarrel must agree pretty nearly with the case of the others also, at least in the time of Laurentius, when "the Scots were in no respect different from the Britons in their habits," as he says in his letter. At a later period, however, the Britons shewed much more of party spirit, obstinacy, and bitterness, in this controversy, than was manifested by their Irish neighbours; although both were alike censured as disorderly and schismatical by the Roman party.

A.D. 620.
The Irish
and Britons
agreed in
their oppo-
sition to
Rome.

The Churches of Britain, with whom the Irish were nearly or entirely agreed in this particular, used in the earliest times of which we have authentic accounts, to celebrate their Easter according to the system adopted by the Romans and other Christians of the west of Europe. This is distinctly stated by the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, in a letter addressed by him to the Churches in his dominions, after the sitting

The earliest
British
Christians
agreed with
the Romans
in their
mode of ob-
serving Eas-
ter.

A. D. 620.

Origin of
the differ-
ence that
afterwards
existed.

The Britons
not submis-
sive to Rome
in this con-
troversy.

of the famous Council of Nice, in which he says, that before that time, (A.D. 325,) one and the same Easter used to be "observed by all the Churches of the western, and southern, and northern parts of the world, and by some of those in eastern countries;" and in particular that this Easter was used, "*in the city of Rome, and all through Italy, in the provinces of Gaul, the British territories, &c. &c.*"* In the course of time, however, the Romans found occasion to alter and correct the method used by them for calculating the time of their great festival: and these alterations were not adopted by the Britons and Irish, nor perhaps well understood by them in general for a long time; owing partly it may be, to that interruption of communication between Rome and the British Isles, which was caused by the Saxon troubles, and continued for a period of nearly one hundred and fifty years, from the commencement of their invasions in A.D. 449, to the arrival of the Roman missionary, Augustine, in 596.

Such appears to have been the origin of the differences concerning Easter between the Church of Rome and the ancient British Churches; and as our forefathers in these countries did not then hold the doctrine of the necessity of communion with the Church of Rome, or submission to papal supremacy, as essential articles of the Ca-

* In *Vita Constantini*, lib. iii. cap. 19.

tholic faith, to be received on pain of everlasting damnation, it so came to pass, that when their differences were pressed upon their attention, and they called upon to conform, they, or at least the greater and more distinguished part of them, refused to do so, and stoutly and perseveringly maintained their independence; although by acting in this way they felt that they were subjecting themselves to an excommunication, and were generally regarded by their antagonists as being no Catholics, but in a state of schism or heresy. This will appear more clearly from what follows.

A. D. 620.

Early in the seventh century the question about Easter had given rise to much controversy and dissension in Ireland, occasioned in part perhaps by the letter of Laurentius and the other Roman prelates, already noticed: and this dispute seems to have been at its height about the year 634, when Pope Honorius I. being desirous to make an effort to bring the Irish into conformity with the see of Rome, addressed to them a letter,* in which he "exhorted them not to esteem their own scanty little number, inhabiting the very ends of the earth, as wiser than the Churches of Christ, ancient and modern, throughout the world: and not to persevere in celebrating a different Easter from theirs, in op-

Letter of
Pope Honorius I. to
the Irish.
A.D. 634.

* Bede. Hist. Ec. lib. ii. cap. 19.

A. D. 634.

The south-
ern Irish
adopt the
Roman Easter.

position to the paschal computations and synodal decrees of the bishops of the whole world."

Venerable Bede states* that "the Scottish tribes that inhabited the *southern parts* of the island of Ireland, learned to observe Easter according to the regular canonical system, by the admonition of the prelate of the apostolic see." These words may possibly refer to the letter of Honorius above mentioned: it is however extremely difficult to arrange the dates of the transactions now under consideration, with the exactness necessary for enabling us to form a clear and satisfactory view of their mutual connection.

St. Cum-
mian writes
an apology
for his hav-
ing con-
formed to
the Roman
system.

But this is certain, that just about the time when the letter of Pope Honorius was written, the new Roman method of calculating Easter was introduced into the south of Ireland, and adopted by the general consent of the most influential ecclesiastics in those parts. Among the persons who thus conformed was the famous and learned St. Cummian, whose adhesion to the new system gave such offence, and raised such a cry against him, that he deemed it prudent to write a long and careful letter of apology for his conduct. It was addressed to Segienus, abbot of Hy, probably on account of the circumstance that the monks of Hy were the greatest enemies

* Hist. Ec. iii. 3.

of the Roman Easter, and most violent in their opposition to it and the other Roman customs then under discussion. There is also reason for believing that Cumman himself had been educated in a Columbian monastery.* It appears from his letter to Segienus, as we shall see more fully in the next chapter, that on account of his having conformed to the Roman system, he was branded by his opponents as a heretic, and that he was not slow to retort upon them the same harsh appellation.

But the question about Easter was as far from being settled among the Irish generally as ever: and so it appears that about six years after the date of Honorius's letter, several Irish ecclesiastics, belonging chiefly to the northern parts of the island, addressed a letter to Rome, desiring further information on the subject. This letter arrived in the city only a little before the death of Pope Severinus, (successor to Honorius,) which took place on August 1, 640; and so it was not replied to, nor even opened, until after that event; when John, the new pope elect, and other principal clergy of Rome, sent an answer to it.† In this they tell the Irish prelates that they had "met with some persons from their

A. D. 634.

Letter of
the clergy
of Rome to
the Irish.
A.D. 640.

* Vid. Usher's *Sylloge Epistolarum Hibernicarum*, No. 11. Lanigan's *Ec. Hist.* ii. 395. Colgan, *AA.* 88. p. 408.

† Bed. H. E. ii. 19.

A. D. 640.

Its ill success.

The Church of Rome not the Catholic and Apostolic Church with the old Irish.

country, who were endeavouring, contrary to the orthodox faith, to propagate a new heresy, founded upon an old one," and to join with Quarta-decimans and Jews in their mode of celebrating Easter. They also warn the Irish in the same letter to beware of the Pelagian heresy, which appeared to be reviving among them at this time, after having been suppressed in other places where it had previously spread. It must have been then of recent origin in this country; nor does it appear to have ever prevailed here to any considerable extent.* So far as the matter of Easter was concerned, the northern Irish appear to have been little influenced by the opinions, admonitions, or arguments of the popes and clergy of Rome: for they, with the Picts and Britons, continued to follow their own system for many years after this period.

The throne of the kingdom of Northumberland was filled in A.D. 664 by a prince named Oswy, who had received his education from Irish instructors. Bede in speaking of him says,† that "although he was brought up by the Scottish, yet he had come to know rightly that the Roman was the Catholic and Apostolic Church," or as it may be translated, "that the Roman Church was Catholic and Apostolic:" where it is plainly implied that the Scots or Irish with whom he

* Lanigan, II. 410.

† Hist. Eccl. III. 29.

had studied, thought otherwise of the Church of Rome. A. D. 664.

In the same year, (A.D. 664) Wilfrid, one of the Roman party, was chosen archbishop of York: but when nominated to this dignity he at first steadfastly "refused to accept it, lest he should receive his consecration from the Scottish [i.e. Irish] bishops, or those that had been ordained by the Scots, whose communion the Apostolic See rejected."* The speech which he made use of on this occasion is thus given by Stephen the priest, (or Æddi, as he is otherwise called,) who wrote Wilfrid's life in A.D. 720.† The words are addressed to the two joint kings of Northumberland, who had chosen him bishop: "O my honorable lords the kings, it is altogether necessary for us prudently to consider, now that I have been thus elected by you, how I may, by the help of God, arrive at the episcopal dignity without incurring censure from Catholics. For there are here in Britain many bishops, none of whom it is my part to accuse, although I am well aware that they are Quartadecimans as the Britons and Scots, or else ordained by persons of that sort, whom the Apostolic See has not received into her communion, any more than those who sympathize with such

The Roman party not satisfied of the validity of the orders of the British and Irish.

* Gul. Malmes. de Gest. Pontif. Angl. lib. iii.

† Vita S. Wilfridi. cap. xii. apud Gale, xv. Scriptores, p. 57.

A.D. 664.

On account
of which
Wilfrid goes
to France to
be ordained.

The British
and Irish
"schisma-
tics," ac-
cording to
Roman writ-
ters.

St. Cuth-
bert's dying
words.
A.D. 687.

schismatics. And therefore I beg of you, with much deference, that you would send me, under your protection, beyond the sea, to France, where many Catholic bishops are to be had: that so without any controversy with the Apostolic See, I may be counted meet, though unworthy, to receive the episcopal character."

This request of Wilfrid's was granted, and he was accordingly sent to France, and ordained by Agilbert, bishop of Paris. For, as we learn from Bede, "there was not at that time in all Britain any bishop canonically ordained," (that is to say, by such as were of the communion of the Church of Rome,) "excepting only Wini," bishop of the West Saxons.* Of this Wilfrid here mentioned, his biographer also informs us that he had learned at Rome from Archdeacon Boniface, "the four Gospels of Christ perfectly, and the right way of computing Easter, which the schismatics of Britain and Ireland did not understand, along with many other rules of ecclesiastical discipline."†

So great was the opposition and animosity that existed in this age, between the Roman Christians and their opponents in this controversy, that when the famous St. Cuthbert, bishop of Landisfarne, was on his dying bed, (in A.D. 687,) exhorting his brethren who survived him

* Bed. H. E. lib. iii. cap. 28, et iv. 2. † Vit. S. Wilf. cap. 5.

to cherish mutual affection and love towards each other, and peace and kindness towards all the servants of Christ, he added in his last address to them, the following remarkable words: "But with such as swerve from Catholic unity and peace, either in refusing to celebrate Easter at the right time, or by living perversely; with such have no communion: and observe and remember, that if ever in time of trouble, necessity shall force you to choose one thing of the two, I had much rather that you would tear up my bones from their tomb, and carry them with you from this place, and take up your dwelling wherever God's providence may permit, than that you should by any means participate in iniquity, and bend your necks under the yoke of schismatics."*

A.D. 687.

But no writer has described with more clearness than Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury in England, the extreme length to which the Britons, about this period, carried their hatred of the Roman or Saxon Christians. There is still preserved a letter addressed by Aldhelm to Geruntius, king of the Britons of West Wales, (or Cornwall,) and to the clergy of his dominions: it was written, by direction of a synod of bishops "from almost all parts of Britain," for the purpose of urging on the Britons the neces-

Aldhelm's description of the hatred shewn towards the Romans by the British.
A.D. 690.

* Bed. Vit. S. Cuthberti. cap. 39.

A. D. 690.

sity of consulting for the peace and unity of the Church, and adopting a more friendly course of conduct toward men professing the same faith with themselves. In this letter, written about A.D. 690, Aldhelm complains that "the British priests on the other side of the channel of the Severn, puffed up with a conceit of the peculiar purity of their own conversation, do utterly abominate the thought of communion with us, insomuch that they will not condescend, either to join in prayers with us at church, or to sit at meat at the same table with us in the kindly intercourse of society: nay, the very fragments that remain of our dishes, and what is left after our refreshments, they throw out to be eaten by their gluttonous dogs and filthy pigs. The vessels, too, and cups which we use, they take care to have scoured and purified, either with sandy clay from the gravel pit, or with yellow ashes from their cinders. They cannot bring themselves to salute us peaceably. . . . But further, if any of our people, that is, the Catholic party, will go to them for the purpose of living among them, they do not condescend to admit such persons to their company and society, until they are forced to perform a quarantine of forty days' penance."*

In further illustration of this subject, we find

* Bonifacii Epistola, No. 44.

in a collection of canons of the Anglo-Saxon Church, compiled about A.D. 700, one to this effect—"That such as have received ordination from the bishops of the Scots [i.e. the Irish] or Britons, who in the matter of Easter and the tonsure are not united to the Catholic Church, must again by imposition of hands be confirmed by a Catholic bishop," &c.*

A.D. 690.
Anglo-Saxon canon against the Britons and Irish.
A.D. 700.

And lastly, to close here this chapter of our work, we have Bede himself telling us in A.D. 731, that "even to this day it is the manner of the Britons to entertain a contempt for the faith and religion of the English, and to hold no more intercourse with them of any sort than they would with Pagans."†

The Britons in Bede's time still maintain the quarrel.
A.D. 731.

CHAP. IV.

OF ST. CUMMIÁN'S PASCHAL EPISTLE, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH THE WRITING OF IT.

THE letter of apology which St. Cummián wrote after having conformed to the Roman Easter and other rites connected with it, is still extant, and exhibits proofs of very great learning not only in the Holy Scriptures, but likewise in the Fathers, in history, and in astronomical tables. It also

Account of St. Cummián's letter to Segienus.
A.D. 634.

* Ussher's *Religion of the Ancient Irish*, chap. x. Concil. Lab. and Cons., tom. vi. p. 1877. B. Lut. Par. 1671.

† Hist. Ec. lib. ii. cap. 20.

A.D. 634.

throws so much light on the circumstances of the Church in the south of Ireland, and its position with regard to the Church of Rome, at the time when this letter was written, that it will be desirable to introduce in this place very copious extracts from it; commencing with the opening paragraph, which is as follows;*

He describes the manner in which he had viewed and investigated the subject.

“What I have here to say in defence of my conduct,” says Cummian, “I do not presume to thrust upon the notice of your holiness† in an offensive manner; but I desire that you should, as fathers, accept of my apology; for I call God as a record upon my soul, that it is not from disrespect towards you, nor from a conceit of my own moral wisdom, regardless of what others may think, that I have not adopted the mode of celebrating Easter which is used by other sensible men. For in the first year in which the cycle of 532 years was introduced into use by our friends, I did not adopt it, but held my tongue, not venturing either to praise or censure it, as considering that I was very far from being wiser than Hebrews, Greeks, and Latins, (whose languages, as Jerome says, Christ sanctified by the title of His cross.) Then remembering that the Apostle says; *Prove all things, hold fast that*

* Vid Ussher's *Sylloge*, Ep. xi. † This title was formerly given to all bishops. Vid. Ussher's *Sylloge* Ep. xvii. Todd's *Church of St. Patrick*, p. 60. In Hebrews, iii. 1, a similar form is used in addressing Christians in general.

*which is good,** I refrained from disliking a thing before I had tasted it. Afterwards retiring into private for a year, I entered into the sanctuary of God, that is, the Holy Scripture, and examined it as I was able: after that, works on history; lastly whatever cycles I could meet with."

A.D. 634.

The Holy Scriptures his first guide:

Cummian then proceeds to give a rather lengthy summary of the result of his investigation, commencing with the Scriptural part of the inquiry: in connection with which he quotes very many passages from Exodus xii. and other parts of both Old and New Testaments, explaining the original appointment of the Jewish Passover, and the corresponding Christian rite. From this he turns to the historical view of the question, and here observes, "I found it on record, that they were to be excommunicated, and banished from the Church, and anathematized, who resist the canonical ordinance of the four-fold apostolic see, (namely of Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria,) which are entirely unanimous on the subject of Easter." In this part of his letter St. Cummian refers particularly to the Councils of Nice and Arles, then and presently subjoins the following remarks;

after examining which, he next turns to history for further information,

and gathers from it that the Irish were excommunicated by Rome, &c.

"We must therefore beware, as Jerome says, of eating the typical lamb contrary to the precept

St. Jerome's authority quoted.

* 1 Thes. v. 21.

A. D. 634.

Cummián
insinuates
that the
Britons and
Irish were
perverse
heretics.

Ancient au-
thority the
great argu-
ment of the
Irish party.

Cummián's
reply.

of the law, outside the one house,* that is, outside the universal Church. From which it is manifest, he says, that the Jews and heretics, and all the conventicles of perverse doctrines who eat not the lamb in the one Church, that they eat, not the flesh of the lamb, but that of the serpent, which is given, as the Psalmist says, for meat to the people of Ethiopia.†

"And this, I fear," continues Cummián, "is too true, but do you consider, what are the conventicles of which I speak : whether it is the Hebrews, and Greeks, and Latins, and Egyptians, who are united together in their mode of observing the great festivals ; or the little party formed by the Britons and Sects, who are almost at the very end of the world, and but a mere scab, so to speak, on its surface."

The great argument constantly alleged by the anti-Roman party in this controversy, was, that they were unwilling to depart from the primitive teaching and traditions of their elders and forefathers, whose memory they revered as that of men eminently enlightened by divine grace, and whose precepts and practices they would on no account recede from, nor alter. In answer to which favourite consideration Cummián observes: "But as for our elders, whom you make use of for a cloak of defence, they observed simply and

* See Exodus xii. 46.

† Ps. 74. 14.

faithfully that which they knew to be the best in their days, without the fault of any contradiction or animosity ; and they handed it down to their posterity in like manner ; according to what the Apostle says, *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good ; abstain from every appearance of evil.** But I am afraid it may be your feeling to regard the unanimous rule of the universal Catholic Church as an appearance of evil : which Heaven forbid." A.D. 634.

With reference to the charge of being a heretic, which his adversaries brought against him, Cummian expresses himself in the following temperate and reasonable terms : "And this," says he, "I beg of you, particularly to attend to, either to forgive me what I have done, or else to set me right by alleging more cogent and decisive arguments, oral or written, if you have them, in order to give me a better view of the other system ; and I will cordially adopt it, as I have adopted this. But if you have no such arguments, observe silence, and refrain from calling us heretics. For it is written,† *Woe unto you that call evil good, and good evil ; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness.* For,‡ *we are the children of the day, not of the night, nor of darkness ;* and you have need to beware of what is said of others, that *they slew the souls that are not dying, and saved*

He deprecates being called a heretic.

* 1 Thes. v. 21, 22.

† Isaiah, v. 20.

‡ 1 Thes. v. 5.

A. D. 634.

He urges the necessity of maintaining the Church's unity, and on this point quotes St. Jerome,

*alive the souls that are not living.** We do not cherish hatred towards you, but merely defend ourselves with statements of the truth."

After this, St. Cummian next proceeds to dwell upon the necessity of holding with the Catholic Church, and maintaining its unity; and here he cites various ecclesiastical authorities, the Fathers, &c., in support of his opinions. The first named is St. Jerome, from whose writings he brings forward several passages suitable to his purpose: the only one of these, however, worth noticing here, is a quotation from a letter of this author to Pope Damasus, in which mention is made of the chair of St. Peter. It runs thus, "Ancient authority, says he, [i.e. Jerome,] is cited against me. I meanwhile exclaim, if any be in union with the chair of St. Peter, that is the man for me."† As to what is the meaning and import of these words, we shall consider that presently.

and various other authorities.

Cummian then refers to St. Cyprian, on the same subject of the unity of the Church; likewise to the article of the creed, which says, "I believe in one Catholic Church;" to the circumstances of the deluge, in which there was only one ark safe; to the case of the destruction of Jericho, where only one house was spared; and to the words of the Psalmist, *Behold how good*

* Ezek. xiii. 19.

† Jerome's Works, Ep. xvi. vol. i. p. 437.—*Ed. Vallartii.*

and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity: he also quotes in this part of his letter, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory the Great, and in the course of this argument again presses his opponents to consider seriously the weight of authority that was against them. "It is written in the law," says he, "*Whosoever shall revile father or mother, let him die the death.*"* Now what more injurious sentiment can be entertained concerning our mother the Church, than if we are to say, Rome errs, Jerusalem errs, Alexandria errs, Antioch errs, the whole world errs, the Britons and Scots [i.e. the Irish] are the only people who think aright."

A. D. 634.

He charges the Britons and Irish with opposing the whole world.

Cummian then turns to the consideration of the astronomical cycles used in calculating the time of Easter, and says that during his year of study he had examined many, and found them all to differ from that in use with the Irish in his day—He mentions in particular the cycle adopted by Saint Patrick, or as he expresses it, "the one introduced into use by our pope, Saint Patrick;" for in early times the name of pope was applied to other bishops, as well as to him of the Roman see. Cummian speaks also of different other cycles which he had studied, as those of Anatolius, Dionysius, Pacomius, and several besides these, which we need not here

His inquiry into the astronomical view of the question:

in which occurs an interesting notice of St. Patrick.

* Exodus, xxi. 17.

A. D. 634.

enumerate. It is worthy of observation in passing, that the mention of Saint Patrick which occurs in this letter is one of the earliest authentic notices of that saint which we meet with in our ancient records.

Cummian's practical exhortation in concluding this subject.

Having brought to a close his statement of the arguments from Holy Scripture, history, and astronomical tables, by which his mind had been influenced, Cummian adds to this part of his statement, the following practical observations—
"Approve of this reasoning," says he, *"if you will; if not, away with Catholic authorities: if neither of these alternatives be pleasing to you, let us both agree to this, We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body.* And let us not judge before the time, until He come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.† And judge not that ye be not judged: for with whatsoever judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.‡ And why dost thou judge another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.¶* What I am saying is, I perceive, a burden to you: what you say is also a burden to me, unless you shall prove it by the word of Holy Scripture. Let us then *bear one*

* 2. Cor. v. 10. † 1. Cor. iv. 5. ‡ St. Matt. vii. 1, 2. ¶ Rom. xiv. 4.

another's burdens, and we shall so fulfil the law of Christ. For if we wound each others' weak conscience, it is against Christ we sin.†*

A. D. 634.

The latter part of Cummian's letter gives us an account of what took place at the end of his year of study: and this will perhaps be best explained in his own words: "When therefore," says he, "the year above-mentioned had expired, according to what is said in Deuteronomy, *I asked my fathers that they should shew me,‡* the successors namely of our ancient fathers, bishop Ailbe, Kieran of Clonmacnois, Brendin, Nesson, and Lugidus, what they thought of our excommunication, decreed by the apostolic sees aforesaid. And they having attended, either in person, or by others commissioned as their proxies, a meeting which was held in Campus-Lene, passed a resolution to this effect, that, "Our predecessors have directed us, by means of competent witnesses, some of whom are alive, others fallen asleep in peace, that we should humbly adopt, without scruple, the more worthy and approved practices, recommended to us from the source of our baptism and wisdom, and by the successors of the apostles of the Lord." After this they rose up together, and made an address to us on this subject, (according to the usual method) enjoining upon us to celebrate Easter in the next year

Account of what occurred after St. Cummian's year of study;

and of the Synod in Campus-Lene.

The southern prelates adopt the common Easter;

* Gal. vi. 2.

† 1 Cor. viii. 12.

‡ Deut. xxxii. 7.

A. D. 634.
but not un-
animously.

with the universal Church. But not long after there arose up a certain whited wall, pretending that he was for upholding the traditions of his elders, who did not make both one,* but caused separation, and partly rendered void what had been agreed to: whom the Lord (as I hope) will smite as seemeth him good.

A deputa-
tion is sent
abroad for
further in-
formation in
this matter.

“Upon this,” continues Cumian, “it was determined by our elders, (according to the precept that, *if a disagreement shall have arisen between plea and plea, and there shall be a difference of judgment between what is leprosy, and what is not, recourse should be had to the place, which the Lord hath chosen,*†) that if questions of a more weighty character should arise, they ought to be referred, according to the decree of the Synod, to the head of cities: we accordingly sent some that we knew to be wise and humble, as children to a mother, and they having a prosperous journey by the will of God, and some of them having come to the city of Rome, returned to us in the third year; and they saw every thing accord with what they had heard, or rather they obtained a much clearer view of the matter, as seeing instead of hearing: and being in one lodging with a Greek and an Hebrew, a Scythian and an Egyptian, they all celebrated their Easter together in St. Peter’s Church, while we differed

The result
of their ob-
servation.

* Alluding to Ephes. ii. 14.

† Deut. xvii. 8.

from them by a whole month. And they solemnly assured us of this, saying, "This Easter is celebrated, to our knowledge, all the world over." And we are convinced that the power of God is in the relics of holy martyrs, and in the Scriptures, which they brought with them. We have seen with our own eyes a girl, stone blind, open her eyes at these relics, and a paralytic walking, and many devils cast out.

A. D. 634.

"These statements I have made," adds Cum-
mian, "not with a view to attack you, but in order to defend myself as a night-raven concealed in my retreat, &c." And after this he concludes with further apologies for his writing this letter, the style of it, &c. We may now make a few brief observations on this remarkable and interesting document.

Close of
Cummian's
letter, and
remarks on
it.

And, *First*, it is evident, that at the time when St. Cummian penned his letter on the Paschal controversy, there was among the Irish, as well as the Britons, a very strong popular feeling of opposition towards Rome, and towards all who were attached to Rome: "The popular cry in Ireland, at that time, was, *Rome errs, and they who side with Rome are heretics: the Britons and the Irish alone are right.*"* And as the

The popular
feeling of
the Irish at
that time
hostile to
Rome.

* See the Rev. Wm. G. Todd's learned little work, entitled, *The Church of St. Patrick, an historical inquiry into the independence of the Ancient Church of Ireland*, p. 114. Parker, London, 1844.

A. D. 634.

feeling here spoken of led those who cherished it to brand St. Cummian as a heretic for his conformity to the Roman system,* so he, on the other hand, as one of the opposite party, was not slow to retort the charge upon his countrymen; whose churches he plainly gives them to understand, were in his mind no better than "conventicles" for the propagation of "perverse and heretical doctrines."†

Some of the Irish more friendly to the Church of Rome.

Secondly, there were however at the same time, not a few influential persons in the Church of Ireland, who looked on the Roman Church with a much more favourable eye; and in the southern part of the island especially there were many in stations of authority, who valued the circumstance of being in communion with the see of Rome, as a privilege of great importance. To this class St. Cummian belonged, and his letter at present under consideration throws an interesting light upon the views and feelings of those who agreed with him in opinion; i.e. of that portion of the Irish Church which maintained and cherished communion with the Church of Rome. It is evident from Cummian's words, that these persons regarded themselves as being cut off by excommunication from the great body of the Church, so long as they continued to adhere to the Irish Easter.‡

* Vid. sup. p. 157. † p. 156. ‡ p. 161.

But, *Thirdly*, we may easily see from the letter of St. Cummian, that while the Irish Church, as a body, was perfectly independent of the see of Rome, even those of our countrymen who were most attached to the latter, (as Cummian himself for instance,) were very far indeed from imagining it or its bishop to be endued with any of that infallibility, or supreme authority in ecclesiastical affairs, with which the opinion of the modern Romanist supposes them to have been always divinely invested. A few observations on the views of St. Cummian and his party will help to place this matter in a clearer light.

A. D. 634.
Yet they did not believe in papal supremacy or infallibility.

1. These Irishmen then, who are here spoken of, had a very great respect for Rome, as being "*the head of cities*," that is, the largest and most civilized city in the world, the first in influence and importance. This however did not make them think that other cities, such as Dublin, or Armagh, were under the temporal jurisdiction of the sovereign of Rome. So that even if Cummian had called Rome the "*head of Churches*," instead of the head of cities, this would not have attributed to her any authority in the government of other churches, but only superiority of rank and importance: and that she was possessed of such superiority, was a circumstance naturally arising from her position as the head of cities, which, with St. Cummian, we readily admit Rome

In what sense the latter persons looked on Rome as the head of cities.

A. D. 634.

Cummian's
regard for
Rome, as
being out of
the principal
sees of the
Catholic
Church.

to have been at that time. We believe London to be now in the same sense the "head of cities," but yet we do not think this should make the Churches in Italy subject to the bishop of London.

2. Cummian's party also respected the Church of Rome highly, because it was one of those great sees to which the general councils of the Church had assigned a place of dignity and pre-eminence beyond that which was possessed by the other Churches of the world. It was indeed placed the first among them; although the Irish were unwilling to allow it this honour, which they would reserve rather for the Church of Jerusalem,* as occupying the place of the Lord's Resurrection, and therefore more worthily regarded in their judgment, as "the head of Churches," in memory of its origin and the wonders that marked its infancy. It seems to have been in the point of view here spoken of, (as one of the principal sees of the Catholic Church,) that Cummian looked upon Rome as a mother Church, an ecclesiastical metropolis. She does not however seem to have been regarded *singly* in this light, but rather in conjunction with the other great sees alluded to in his letter. For when the delegates were sent "as children to a mother," some only of them came to Rome, although all had a prosperous

* See the Epistle of St. Columbanus to Pope Boniface, given in the Appendix, No. ii.

journey. A "mother Church," in ancient authors, is sometimes used merely to express one possessed of primacy of rank and order, without any supremacy such as that claimed by Rome. Thus an old writer calls Canterbury, "the mother Church of England, Ireland, and Scotland."* A. D. 634.

3. It is worth observing here, that when the meeting in Campus-Lene agreed that they ought to be guided in controverted causes, by the practice of the Church which was the source of their baptism and instruction, they thereupon resolved to celebrate Easter the next year, not "with the Church of Rome," but "with the universal Church;" that of Rome not being particularly mentioned in any part of the same paragraph.

4. Although St. Cummian's party considered Rome to be a fit place to apply to for information and counsel on subjects in which the Church Catholic was concerned, yet in thus making application to "the head of cities," they were very far from looking for any authoritative decision or judgment upon the case, from any supposed head of the Church to be found there. The very name of the pope is not mentioned in connection with their journey, or their return; nor does he seem to have been at all consulted in the business by these delegates. They brought back no letter from him; not a word about his opinion, nor about

The source of baptism with the Irish, not attributed to Rome in this letter.

The pope's judgment not sought for by Cummian and his friends in the present question:

* Eadmer, (A.D. 1121.) quoted in Todd's *Church of St. Patrick*, p. 92.

A. D. 634.

nor regard-
ed by the
Irish as a
decisive au-
thority.

Rome re-
spected by
Cummian
as the chair
of St. Peter :

but not as
infallible
and beyond
the power of
change.

that of the Church of Rome in particular ; but reported simply the result of their own observa- tion, " We saw Greeks, Latins, &c., doing so and so." Moreover this report of theirs did not settle the controversy in Ireland, for it lasted for many years after, as we shall see shortly. Further, even had they applied to the pope for information and guidance, they would not have felt themselves bound to follow his dictates, unless approved of by their own judgment. For we have seen in the last chapter a case of this sort, where Pope John's letter in reply to the northern ecclesiastics was quite disregarded by them, as that of his predecessor Honorius had been before.*

5. St. Cummian's party, and also others of the Irish, looked upon Rome as worthy of respect, in consequence of having been " the chair of St. Peter," the place where they supposed that he, as well as St. Paul, had preached the Gospel, and suffered death for Christ ; and where also they believed that the remains of those two apostles were committed to the dust, after the close of their earthly labours.†

6. St. Cummian thought Rome to be a fit model for imitation, if any Church in his day could be regarded as such, and therefore he was able to adopt the language of St. Jerome to Pope Da-

* Vid. pp. 147, 148.

† See the letter of St. Columbanus in the Appendix, No. ii.

masus, and say, "whoever is united to the chair of St. Peter, that is the person for me." But in using these words, he stated a mere fact then existing, without in any way pledging himself for the future character or purity of the Church of Rome. Since that time, she has been lamentably changed, and we have little reason to suppose that Cummian would admire her now: we have little reason to doubt but that if he were again alive, retaining his old principles, he would be found a strenuous supporter of the Church of Ireland in her struggle against Italian errors and usurpation.

A. D. 634.

The decree of the Synod referred to by St. Cummian in his letter, is probably the same with that noticed at page 52, which is said to have been enacted at a Synod held by St. Patrick, in conjunction with Auxilius and Isserninus. Ussher does not well know, he says, what credit is to be given to it, as now extant.* Lanigan, as we have observed, admits that it is not genuine, yet thinks that it is probably a fair explanation of a shorter one given by St. Patrick, of which it conveys, as he supposes, the true meaning.†

The "decree of the Synod" spoken of by Cummian, explained.

It appears that Cummian's party had on their side much learning and ability, as is sufficiently evident from the proofs of it given in his remarkable epistle. And his opponents must have pos-

Cummian's views supported by learning and talent.

* Religion of A. L., chap. viii.

† Ec. Hist. chap. ii. 391.

A. D. 634.

sessed the same advantages in no mean degree, in order that they should be able to understand the force of his arguments; into which his manner of writing shews that he expected them to enter fully: for he plainly indicates, that they were well acquainted with those ecclesiastical and astronomical writers, to whose works he refers them.

State of the
Irish libraries
at this
time.

It also appears from these considerations that the Irish libraries at that period must have been well stocked with books, considering the times: and that these volumes were not allowed to lie idle and unused, but were carefully read and studied by the members of the Irish Church.*

Of St. Laserian and Munna, and the Synod of the White Field.

Next to Cummian, the most vigorous promoter of the Roman Easter in the South of Ireland, was Laserian or Lasrean, abbot of Leighlenn, (now called Old Leighlin, in the County Carlow,) who is commonly supposed to have been the first bishop of the Church of Leighlin. In his exertions to introduce the new Easter, he was strenuously opposed by St. Munna, or Fintan Munnu, (as he is otherwise called) founder of the monastery which from him was named Taghmon, (i.e. *Teach-Munna*, or the house of Munna,) near Wexford. In the life of this Munna we read that in his time "there assembled in the White-field a great council of the people of Ireland, at which there was

* Lanigan, vol. ii. p. 396.

a discussion about the observance of Easter ; for Lasrean, abbot of the monastery of Leighlin, who was ruler of a thousand and five hundred monks, defended the new observance that was lately introduced from Rome, but others defended the old,* and among these, St. Munna in particular. Ussher suggests that he may have been the "whited wall," of whom Cummián complains in his letter. We are not told whether any important consequences followed from the Synod here spoken of, but the result of its deliberation was no doubt favourable to the Roman party.

A. D. 634.

Archbishop Ussher was of opinion that the Council of the White-field, mentioned in St. Munna's Life, was the same as that of Campus-Lene, or Maghlene noticed by Cummián in his letter, and that it was held in the year 630. But there seems to be considerable reason for doubting the truth of this opinion ; and it is more probable that the two Synods here alluded to were distinct, and held at different times as well as places. That of Maghlene was probably held in A.D. 630 : the other at Old Leighlin in 634 : and although the latter is not mentioned expressly by Cummián, it may be alluded to, where he speaks of the report of the deputies appointed at the first

Chronology of the proceedings mentioned in this chapter somewhat uncertain.

* Ussher's Religion of A. I., chap. ix. Lanigan li. 392. Colgan AA. 88. p. 409.

A. D. 624.

Laserian no
pope's le-
gate.

meeting, as it was probably assembled to receive their statement, and consider how to act upon it.

Laserian is in some legends represented as having been the pope's legate in Ireland, but this idle story is rejected by the best authors on all sides.* He may indeed have brought a letter from the pope (perhaps that of Honorius, mentioned at p. 145,) to the Irish; but this would not make him a pope's legate; and it is known from good authority that there was no such officer in this country before the twelfth century—but of this, more by and by.†

CHAP. V.

PROGRESS OF THE PASCHAL CONTROVERSY IN ENGLAND—PROCEEDINGS OF THE IRISH MISSIONARY BISHOPS OF NORTHUMBERLAND—ACCOUNT OF THE SYNOD OF WHITBY.

Northum-
berland con-
verted by
Roman mis-
sionaries,
A.D. 627.

THE early history of the Church in the kingdom of Northumberland is intimately connected with our present subject. That portion of the heptarchy included “beside the shire of Northumberland, and the lands beyond it into Edinburgh frith, Cumberland also, and Westmoreland, Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the bishopric of Durham.”† This country had embraced the profession of Chris-

* Usher's *Religion of A. I.*, chap. ix. Lanigan, *Ec. Hist.* vol. ii, p. 393.

† Bernard, *Vit. Mal.* cap. x. † Usher's *Religion of A. I.*, chap. x.

tianity under King Edwin, A.D. 627, in consequence of the labours of Paulinus, a Roman missionary of the court of Edilburga, Edwin's queen, who was daughter of Ethelbert, king of Kent.*

A. D. 627.

Edwin dying in battle in 633 the whole kingdom relapsed to Paganism, and Queen Edilburga and Paulinus, archbishop of York, returned to Kent. Two princes apostates from Christianity succeeded; and they having fallen in battle the same year were in their turn succeeded by Oswald, a Christian.† This latter prince had been educated among the Scottish people, and therefore on his accession to the throne, being anxious for the propagation of the Gospel in his dominions, he applied to them to send him Christian teachers to instruct his people. A monk from the college of Iona was therefore sent to him for this purpose. Unhappily however the individual selected proved to be of a harsh and austere disposition; and this was such an impediment to his usefulness that he soon found he could effect little by his preaching; in consequence of which he resigned the work and returned to Iona.‡

Relapses to Paganism, A.D. 633.

King Oswald applies to the Scots for Christian teachers for his people.

Upon this, Aidan, another monk of the same community, in whom the most devoted piety was combined with an amiable and engaging disposition, succeeded to the mission in Northumber-

St. Aidan is sent from Iona as bishop of Northumberland.

* Bed. Eccl. Hist., lib. ii. cap. 14.

† ib. iii. 1.

‡ ib. iii. 5.

A. D. 634.

His character.

He introduces the Irish Easter into Northumberland.

Bede's commendation of Aidan;

land; having been previously promoted to the episcopal order,* that he might commence his important undertaking in a more becoming and dignified character, and with fuller powers for making all necessary arrangements connected with his work. The personal qualifications of Aidan for the high office to which he was appointed, are spoken of in terms of the highest praise, even by writers who held different sentiments from his on things that were esteemed of very serious importance; as for instance, the mode of calculating Easter. For all the monks of Hy followed the Irish rule, and were most strongly attached to it, chiefly through respect for the example, and love for the memory, of their great founder St. Columba, who was said to have used this Easter himself, and recommended it to his followers. And when Aidan came to preach in Northumbria, he introduced it there also, a circumstance which afterwards led to much discord, as we shall see presently.

According to Bede's description of him, Aidan was of a sweet heavenly disposition, "caring not to seek after, nor love, any of the things of this world," but having his heart entirely set on doing good and promoting religion. To his clergy he presented a most wholesome example of gravity and godly living, and to all around recommended

* Bed. iii. 5.

his doctrine in the most effectual way, by making his own practice agreeable to it. The Holy Scriptures he studied every day himself, and obliged all who were under his control to do the same, as Bede tells us in these words: "So much," says he, "did his life differ from the laziness of our time, that all who went with him, whether those who had undergone the tonsure, or the laity, were bound to employ themselves in meditation, that is, to be occupied either in reading the Scriptures or learning the Psalms. This was his daily work, and that of all the brethren who were with him, wherever they came."* In another place the same author says of Aidan, that "although he could not observe Easter differently from those who sent him, yet he took care diligently to perform the works of faith, piety, and love, after the manner usual with all godly persons. Whence he was deservedly loved by all, even by those who had a different feeling on the subject of keeping Easter, and he was held in reverence not only by men of mean reputation, but also by the bishops themselves, Honorius of Canterbury, and Felix of the East Angles."† Yet this high commendation of Aidan is qualified by Bede's applying to him after all, the words used by St. Paul in reference to the Jews who had rejected our Saviour: "He had," saith Bede, "a zeal for God, yet not altogether

A. D. 634.

and of his
love for the
Holy Scrip-
tures.This praise
of Aidan
qualified in
some degree.

* lb.

† cap. 25.

A. D. 634.
 Aidan and
 his succe-
 ssors made
 "Saints,"
 though no
 Romanists.

according to knowledge."* It is well worthy of remark indeed that St. Aidan and his followers who vigorously opposed the teaching of the Church of Rome, and were separated from her communion, were notwithstanding respected by the bishops of the Roman Church, as holy and faithful men, whereas at this day it is taught by the Romish divines that out of their Church there is no salvation nor any performance of acts of faith. St. Aidan himself, and the two Irishmen who succeeded to him in the government of the Northumbrian Church, have ever been held in honour and reverence as worthy and venerable men of God, although they acknowledged not the pope's jurisdiction over them, nor considered it at all necessary that they should yield obedience to the traditions which he professed to have received from St. Peter and St. Paul; traditions which our modern Romanists would have us regard as being of the same authority with the Bible itself.†

Aidan set-
 tles at Lin-
 disfarne,
 and thereby
 shews his in-
 dependence
 of Rome.

Aidan having arrived in Oswald's dominions, requested of the king that he might be allowed to have his episcopal residence at Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, on the eastern coast of the country; and that place having been readily granted to him for the purpose, he established there a collegiate institution similar to that of Iona from

* cap. iii. † Vid. Collier's Ecc. Hist., vol. i. pp. 212, 213, 221, 222.
 and Lanigan, iii. 68.

which he had come to England. York had been selected by Pope Gregory for the seat of the archbishopric, but St. Aidan and his Irish successors in Northumberland shewed in this matter their independence of the Roman see by disregarding its arrangements, and settling themselves in the position, which in their own judgment seemed most convenient.*

A. D. 634.

And now entering on the work of his mission with all possible zeal and industry, Aidan received from the king every assistance in his exertions for the propagation of the Christian faith. So great indeed was the interest which this good prince felt for the spread of religion among his people, that "often, when the bishop was preaching the Gospel, he not being perfectly master of the English language, the king himself would act as interpreter of the heavenly Word to his generals and ministers," for he was well acquainted with the Irish, having received instruction in his youth, (as already mentioned,) from those who spoke it. Soon after Aidan's coming into England, many other teachers also came from Ireland, to preach in Oswald's dominions, while such of them as were priests administered baptism to the new converts: "churches were built in various places; the people flocked together with joy to

Activity of
Aidan and
the other
Irish teach-
ers in Eng-
land.

* Vid. Collier's Ecc. Hist. i. 204.

A. D. 634.

hear the Word of God ;” * money and lands were given of the king’s bounty for establishing monastic schools ; (for most of those who came to preach were monks :) in fine, it became the common practice with the English in that realm, to commit the education of their children to Irish teachers, who instructed them not only in the elementary branches of knowledge, but also in the higher and more advanced studies which were cultivated in the monasteries of those days.

Aidan’s
death.

By the blessing of God upon his labours, Aidan’s mission was eminently prosperous ; and having been the means of recovering the Northumbrian kingdom from Paganism, he continued to rule the Church there for seventeen years, from the time of his first coming to England, to the year 651, in which he entered into his rest.

Finan is
sent from
Iona, as his
successor,
A.D. 651.

The next bishop of Holy Island was Finan, another monk of Iona, who declared himself an open adversary to the Roman Easter, and prosecuted the controversy with the opposite party more fiercely than his predecessor had done before him. The dissension which prevailed, arising out of this question, in the lifetime of St. Aidan and St. Finan, was very great ; but yet it was in some degree moderated by the great reverence which all men felt for these holy bishops, whose

* Bed. Ec. Hist., lib. iii. c. 3 : where all the particulars here mentioned are enumerated.

influence was sufficient to preserve some degree of order while they lived. "Aidan was a great support of the sect," says Eadmer,* (a Latin writer of A.D. 1123,) "inasmuch as he was tolerated by all persons with a sort of patience, when they took into consideration the exemplary character of the life which he spent in the service of God."

A. D. 651.

And his successor, the same writer observes, trod altogether in the footsteps of Aidan. St. Finan was a very active missionary of the Gospel, and "by his means" (as Archbishop Ussher† collects from Bede) "not only the kingdom of the East Saxons, which contained Essex, Middlesex, and half of Hertfordshire, regained, but also the large kingdom of Mercia was first converted unto Christianity; which comprehended under it, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Rutlandshire, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Shropshire, Nottinghamshire, Cheshire, and the other half of Hertfordshire. Indeed when we consider how largely and effectually these Irish missionaries and their followers laboured in advancing the Christian cause in England, we may well be inclined to agree in the remark of Archbishop Ussher, that they, who

Finan's success in promoting the Christian religion in England.

The Irish missionaries there, more effective than those of Rome.

* In vita Wilfrid, § 13.—Mabillon, *Acta Sanctorum* O.S.B.

† Religion of A. I. chap. 10.

A. D. 651.

Colman suc-
ceeds Finan.
A.D. 661.

State of the
Paschal con-
troversy at
this time.

professed no subjection to the see or Church of Rome, did in their extraordinary sanctity of life and painfulness in preaching the Gospel go far beyond those of the other side, that afterward thrust them out and entered in upon their labours.*

Finan occupied the bishopric of Holy Island for ten years, and at his death in A.D. 661, was succeeded by another monk of Iona, named Colman. The latter steadily trod in the same steps as the two others that preceded him, in opposing the Roman Easter, and zealously upholding the system of the Britons and Irish.†

The throne of Northumberland was now filled by a prince named Oswy, brother to the late King Oswald, who fell in battle in A.D. 642. In Oswy's reign the controversy about Easter assumed such a serious aspect, that the dissensions arising out of it could be tolerated no longer : they had extended even into private families, and were disturbing the harmony of the royal residence itself. For Oswy adhered to the Irish Easter, through respect for those by whom he had been educated ; and his queen Eanfleda for a like reason followed the opposite system ; she being a Kentish princess, and as such, attached to the Roman customs which prevailed in her own country : and so it came to pass that sometimes when the king had finished his Lent, and was enjoying the festival

* Religion of A. I. chap. 10.

† Bed. E. H. iii. 25, 26.

of Easter, the queen was still fasting, and had only arrived at Palm Sunday. Alchfrid, the king's eldest son, was another supporter of the Roman rite, having been so taught by his tutor the learned Saxon priest Wilfrid, already mentioned. (p. 149.) There were also many others of the same way of thinking; for it is to be remembered that Northumbria had been at first instructed in the Christian faith, at least partially, by Roman missionaries: and when Paulinus fled from persecution in that country, his deacon James remained behind at York, still exerting himself as far as he could, in propagating religion, and that of course after the peculiar system of the Roman Church.*

A. D. 661.

In order therefore to decide between the contending parties, and settle the controversy, a council was summoned by the authority of King Oswy, at Streaneshall, (now named Whitby, in Yorkshire;) where St. Hilda, the mother abbess of the monastery of Streaneshall, supplied the place of moderator. She was a favourer of the Irish Easter; and was highly esteemed for her extraordinary wisdom and piety.† The synod or conference at Whitby was held in A.D. 664; St. Colman appeared there as the principal advocate of the Irish customs, and Wilfrid, as the chief speaker in defence of those of Rome.

Account of
the Synod of
Whitby,
A.D. 664.

* ib.

† ib. iv. 23.

A. D. 664.
 St. Colman's
 defence of
 the Irish
 Easter.

St. Colman having been allowed to speak first, the argument used by him on this occasion is thus given in the "Life of Wilfrid," written by Stephen the priest,—“Our fathers and their predecessors, who were manifestly inspired by the Holy Ghost, as Columbkille was, did ordain that Easter should be celebrated on the fourteenth day of the moon, in case it were on Sunday; following the example of John the apostle and evangelist, who leaned upon the Lord's breast at supper, and was called the lover of the Lord. He celebrated Easter on the fourteenth day of the moon; and we celebrate it in like manner as did his disciples, Polycarp and others; neither dare we, for our parts, neither will we, change this.”

Bede's account of his speech.

Bede gives the speech of Colman thus—“This Easter which I am used to observe, I received from my seniors who sent me bishop hither: which all our fathers, men beloved of God, are known to have celebrated in the same manner; which, that it may not seem unto any to be condemned and rejected, is the same that the blessed Evangelist St. John, the disciple specially beloved by our Lord, with all the Churches that he did oversee, is read to have celebrated.” “And is it to be believed that Columba, our most reverend father, and his successors, men beloved of God, who observed Easter in the same manner

that we do, did hold or do that which was contrary to the Holy Scriptures?" * A. D. 664.

In answer to St. Colman and his Irish friends, Wilfrid objected that they, with their partners the Picts and Britons, "out of the two utmost isles of the ocean, and not having even the whole of these to support them, were with foolish labour fighting against the whole world." "And if that Columba of yours," saith he, "yea and ours also, if he were Christ's, was holy and powerful in virtues, could he be preferred before the most blessed prince of the apostles? unto whom the Lord said, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*"† In fine, Wilfrid closed by uttering an anathema against all who should dare to celebrate any but the Roman Easter.

From Bede's account it would appear, (as Archbishop Ussher notes,) that the language of Wilfrid "wrought much upon the simplicity of King Oswy;" who finding that all parties were unanimous in admitting that such a promise had been made to Peter, resolved not to act, as regarded this matter, in a way that appeared to be contrary to the authority of so great an apostle; "lest," said he, "upon my coming to the doors of the

Wilfrid's
reply.

King Oswy's
conclusion
of the mat-
ter.

* Bed. H. E. iii. 25.

† ib.

A. D. 664.

kingdom of heaven, there should be none to open if he were displeased who is proved to have possession of the keys." But Stephen, in his life of Wilfrid, states that Oswy said these words *smiling*, which would make him appear less simple than the archbishop represents him, and less serious than he ought to have been.

St. Colman
retires from
his bishopric
in disgust;

The result of the council was however altogether unfavourable to the Irish party, the Roman customs being now received by authority into the Northumbrian realm, and the only choice for those who had opposed them, being either to submit to them, or quit their places. St. Colman preferred the latter alternative, and resigned his bishopric; being "influenced through fear of his country, to regard with contempt the tonsure and method of observing Easter" * used by the Romans; and "perceiving that his doctrine was despised, and his sect looked down upon, taking with him those who would follow him, that is to say, such as would not receive the Catholic Easter and the tonsure of the crown, (for of that also there was then no small question,) he returned back again to the Scots' country."† Such was the respect which an Irish saint of the seventh century had for the authority of the Church of Rome, and such the reverence with which he bowed to her dictates when this council decided

and through
contempt of
Rome.

Others of
the Irish fol-
low his ex-
ample:

* Steph. in Vit. Wilfrid. cap. x.

† Bede. H. E. iii. 26.

in her favour, against the traditions which he had received from the first Christian teachers of his own people. The Scottish monks also that were at Ripon in Yorkshire, (as well as those above mentioned, whom Colman had gathered together in Lindisfarne,) “being offered their choice, preferred to quit their place rather than to receive the Catholic Easter and other canonical rites, according to the custom of the Roman and Apostolic Church.”* And so did matters remain among the Irish about forty years after that, until their own countryman Adamnanus persuaded most of them to yield to the custom of the Churches abroad in this particular.†

A. D. 664.
and in particular, the monks of Lindisfarne, and of Ripon.

The Irish follow their own Easter, to A.D. 703.

The Picts likewise conformed soon after under King Naitan, who “by his royal authority commanded Easter to be observed throughout all the provinces of the Picts according to the cycle of nineteen years, abolishing the erroneous period of eighty-four years” which they before used; and also caused “all priests and monks to be shorn crownwise” after the Roman manner.‡

The Picts conform to the common Easter. A.D. 710.

The monks of Iona or Y-Columbkille in like manner were induced in A.D. 716, by the persuasion of Egbert, an English priest that had been educated in Ireland, to give up the mode of calculating Easter and the tonsure which they had received from Columbkille one hundred and fifty

Also the monks of Iona, A.D. 716.

* Bed. H. E. iii. 25. et iv. 4. et v. 20. † ib. v. 15. et 21. ‡ ib.

A. D. 664.

years before, and to follow the Roman rite about eighty years after the time of Pope Honorius, and the sending of Bishop Aidan from thence into England.*

The Britons
keep to the
old system
until
A.D. 809.

The Britons in the time of Bede still retained their old usage, until Elbodus, chief bishop of North Wales, who died in A.D. 809, brought in the Roman Easter; but we have reason to believe that West Wales stood out still longer, and adhered to the old system until A.D. 842, or even later.†

Colman re-
moves to
Connaught;
and founds
two monas-
teries there.

Before passing from this part of our subject, we should mention, that Colman when he left England, retired first to Iona, bringing with him his Irish followers, and about thirty English monks who were of the same way of thinking with them. Afterwards he removed to the west of Ireland, (of which it would seem he was a native,) and there founded two monasteries: one in the small island of Innisboffin, off the coast of Mayo, which was ultimately assigned to his Irish monks; and the other in the town of Mayo, (a little to the south-east of Castlebar,) which became the residence of his English disciples.‡

He is suc-
ceeded at
Lindisfarne
by Tuda.

The person chosen in Colman's place to be bishop of Holy Island was one Tuda, who had received his education and orders in the *south* of

* Bed. E. H. v. 23. † ib. cap. 24, and Ussher, Rel. of A. I., chap. 10.

‡ Bede. E. H. iv. 4.

Ireland, and who accordingly adopted the Roman customs with respect to Easter, &c.* But Tuda not surviving long after his appointment, was in his turn succeeded by Wilfrid, who re-established the seat of his bishopric at York, and was able afterwards to boast, "that he was the first who taught the true Easter in Northumberland, having turned out the Irish; who arranged that the Church singing should be parted on sides; and who ordered the rule of St. Benedict to be observed by monks."† We have already seen that he was at first unwilling to accept the high office proposed to him, lest he should be obliged to receive his consecration from British or Scottish divines; to avoid which he was at his own request allowed to go beyond sea to France, in order to make sure of canonical ordination. But while Wilfrid protracted time abroad, King Oswy "induced by the advice of the Quartadecimans,‡ appointed another person named Ceadda or Chad, a most religious servant of God and an admirable doctor that came from Ireland," to be ordained bishop of York in his room. This Ceadda was a scholar of Bishop Aidan.

A. D. 664.

Wilfrid is made bishop of York.

His boast.

Chad is appointed to supplant him;

Wilfrid however after some time returned home and had his bishopric restored to him, while St. Chad afterwards translated to

* ib. iii. 26. † Gulielm. Malmesb. Lib. iii. de Gestis Pontific. Angl. Edd. Steph. Vit. S. Wilf. cap. 45.

‡ Gul. Malmes. ut sup.—Steph. Vit. Wilf. cap. 14.

A. D. 664.
 Lichfield,
 A.D. 669.

Chad was removed to the newly founded bishopric of Lichfield. Wilfrid's after life is not wanting in many interesting particulars, but it is less intimately connected with the Church history of Ireland, and my readers are already sufficiently informed of all that concerns the subject immediately under consideration.

CHAP. VI.

OF THE NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE POINTS DISPUTED
 BETWEEN THE CHURCH OF ROME AND THE ANCIENT BRITISH
 CHURCHES.

Inquiry concerning the nature of the points at issue between the Irish and Roman Churches.
 A.D. 664.

WHEN we see that the peace of the Christian body in these islands was so disturbed in early times by strife and dissension: that there was so great a want of sympathy and brotherly kindness between the two contending parties, (viz., the Britons and Irish on the one side, and those of the Roman communion on the other side,) that an Irish bishop at the commencement of the seventh century would refuse to eat meat in the same house with the Roman archbishop of Canterbury,* and another Irish bishop, half a century after, would resign his bishopric rather than accept the terms of communion with Rome;†

* vid. pag. 139 supra. † pag. 184.

when we see the Roman priest who was then appointed to succeed him in that bishopric, refusing to accept that high dignity, (answering to the present archbishopric of York,) lest he should be consecrated by Irishmen, or by those who had received holy orders from the Irish or Britons, and afterwards travelling all the way to France to avoid their imposition of hands;* when we see the Britons towards the close of the seventh century refusing to join in public prayer or even in the common social intercourse of life, with their neighbours of the Roman communion,† and half a century later exhibiting still the same harsh feeling towards them, and having no more intercourse with them in any way, than they would with Pagans;‡—when we see all this, we are naturally led to ask what were the exact points about which these persons contended, or were they of such great importance as to justify the extreme and vehement zeal which both parties manifested in behalf of their own peculiar systems and opinions.

Now the question about Easter being that which was most argued between these two parties, I shall first give the reader some account of what their difference was with regard to this point, in as few words as may suffice for a clear

A. D. 664.

* pag. 149, 150. † pag. 152. See also *Ædd. Steph. Vit. Wilf. cap. 47.*

‡ pag. 153.

The time of
Easter, the
chief point
of dispute.

A. D. 664.

statement of the case in a general way, avoiding such particular details of this intricate subject, as would be quite out of place in a work like the present.*

The method by which it was to be determined in general, founded on the Jewish Paschal rules.

The Resurrection of our Blessed Lord from the grave took place on that first day of the week which came next after the Jewish Passover at which he suffered: in order therefore to celebrate the commemoration of this glorious event at a corresponding season annually, it was only needed to select for this purpose in every year, the Sunday occurring in the week appointed for the Passover. Now we know that the Jews were commanded to sacrifice the Passover, and commence the feast of unleavened bread, on the fourteenth day of the first month at evening;† i.e. at the beginning of the fifteenth day‡ (or about the

* The reader who desires to enter fully into this difficult question of the Paschal controversy, will find very copious and interesting information on the subject delivered with much clearness and learning, in *B. Lamy, de Templo Hierosol.* lib. vii. cap. 7, sec. 1-5, cap. 8, sec. 1, 2, et cap. 9, sec. 1, 2, 3. col. 1261, &c. Ed. Paris. 1720. Lamy describes the Jewish Paschal observances. For a very detailed account of the Quartadeciman controversy in the Christian Church, see *Natahs Alexander, Hist. Eccl.* sec. ii. cap. v. Dis. 5. tom. v. pp. 170-205. Bingli. 1786. See also, *Prideaux's Connection*, Preface, and part ii. book 4. vol. iii. pp. 325-349, Lond. 1729: also, *Horne's Introduction to the H. Scriptures*, vol. iii. part ii. chap. iv. and part iii. chap. iv. pp. 167-304, Lond. 1834: *Wheatly on the Common Prayer*, ch. i. part i. pp. 36-54, Oxf. 1819; *Hales's Analysis of Chronology*, vol. i. pp. 154-157, and 172-174, (where however this author's great learning has not saved him from various inaccuracies, and an appearance of much carelessness); *Bingham's Antiquities*, book xx. chap. 5, sec. 2, 3, 4, vol. vii. pp. 71-84, Lond. 1834.

† Exod. xii. 6.

‡ Levit. xxiii. 5, 6.

full* of the first moon) of their sacred year: for their days were reckoned from evening to evening,† commencing and ending with sunset; and those of each month were counted by the moon's ages, setting out with the day of "the new moon," the Jewish months being lunar ones.‡ The first month also was that whose full moon happened upon or next after the vernal equinox, or commencement of spring, when the days and nights are equal in all parts of the world.§ And since the feast of unleavened bread lasted for seven days, commencing with the evening that came on at the close of the fourteenth day, (on which evening the Paschal lamb was sacrificed,) and continuing until the twenty-first day at evening,|| it thus appears that the whole time occupied by this festival was exactly the third week of the Jewish sacred year.¶

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* Philo Jud. de Vita Mosia, lib. iii. tom. ii. p. 169, Opp. [Lond. ?] 1742. Lamy, *ut sup.* coll. 1277, 1315, i.e. cap. vii. sec. 5, et ix. 2.

† ib. cap. vii. sec. 1. col. 1263. Levit. xxiii. 27, 32.

‡ Lamy, *ut sup.* cap. vii. sec. 3, 4. See Levit. xxiii. 24. Psalm lxxxi. 3. Parkhurst indeed, in his Hebrew Lexicon, (at the word *chodhesh*, a month,) labours to prove that the Jewish months were not lunar, arguing from those passages of Scripture which seem to speak of the year as consisting exactly of twelve months. see 1 Kings iv. 7, 1 Chron. xxvii. 1-15: but his opinion is refuted by Lamy in the places here quoted.

§ Josephus Antiq. Jud. lib. iii. cap. x. vol. i. p. 124. Ed. Oxon. 1720 per Hudson. Philo Jud. *ut sup.* et Lamy, coll. 1268, 1277, 1315. Yet some allege that the Jewish Passover was occasionally celebrated *before* the Equinox. Vid. Euseb. Vita Constantini, lib. iii. cap. xviii., and the note on the subject here alluded to, in Reading's Eusebius, Cantab. 1720, p. 587. See also Lanigan's account of the Paschal controversy, Ec. Hist. vol. ii. p. 372.

¶ Exod. xii. 18, 19.

¶ Bed. Ec. Hist. lib. v. cap. 21.

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In the reckoning of the Christian Church from the earliest ages, the vernal equinox has been usually assigned to the twenty-first day of March, and many are of opinion that this arrangement was one of the rules framed by the General Council of Nice for the settlement of the Paschal controversy, and that the twenty-first day was selected as being that on which the equinox was supposed to fall in the year 325 in which the Council sat.* (The fact however is that the day of the equinox varies, and even since the latest corrections of the calendar, it may be either the twentieth or nineteenth of the month of March.†)

The general
rule for find-
ing Easter.

In accordance with what has been now stated, the following rule for determining Easter Sunday was generally agreed to, viz., that it should always be the Sunday following that fourteenth day of the moon, which either fell upon March 21st, or was the next fourteenth moon after.‡

Peculiarity
of the
Asiatic
Churches
in their
observance
of this feast.

Some however of the early Christians were accustomed to follow a different rule in fixing the day for celebrating their Paschal festival. Those of lesser Asia in particular were distinguished from the Church of Rome and all the western Churches, by discontinuing the fast

* Vid. Hales, Prideaux, Lanigan, &c., ut sup.

† Hales, Analysis, vol. i. p. 156.

‡ The reader may see a curious mystical interpretation of this Paschal rule, (from Bede,) in the Appendix, No. III. For the rule itself, see Prideaux, ut sup. p. 343, and Wheatly p. 37.

which usually preceded Easter, and commencing the celebration of the feast, not on the Sunday after the fourteenth day, but on the fourteenth or Passover day itself, on whatever day of the week it might fall.* This practice gave much offence to the greater part of Christians, who deemed it unlawful to commemorate the Redemption of mankind on any other day than Sunday, as that was the day of our Saviour's glorious Resurrection and triumph over death: and they who kept the festival on a week-day, according to the system of the Asiatics, were known by the reproachful name of *Quarta-decimans*, (from the Latin *quarta decima*, fourteenth,) in consequence of their observing the fourteenth day of the moon as a feast-day, regardless whether the day selected were a Sunday or not.

But even among those who were agreed in judging that Easter ought to be celebrated always on a Sunday, and never on any other day of the week, (as the Britons, Irish, and Romans,) there were still two great causes of disagreement which led different parties to choose different Sundays for the festival; these different days being sometimes a week, sometimes a month, (as the case might be) distant from each other.†

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Two other sources of disagreement in this matter noticed.

* Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. lib. v. cap. 23.

† Prideaux's Connection, Par. ii. book 4, pag. 338.

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 {
 The First,
 using a
 different
 Paschal
 week.

First, the Irish were accustomed to observe their Easter, not in the week from the fifteenth to the twenty-first day of the moon, but in that from the fourteenth to the twentieth day;* or in other words, not always on the Sunday after the Passover, but sometimes on the day of the Passover itself, when that should fall on Sunday.† “The Irish often celebrated their Easter,” says Eadmer, “when it was Palm Sunday, in consequence of its being on the fourteenth day of the moon, which is the limit of the Paschal day;” and for this they were often spoken of as “Quartadecimans” by writers of the Roman party, although the term was not properly applicable to them, and such a use of the word has led to much confusion; but it is too natural for men when finding fault with their neighbours for being in the wrong on any subject, to attribute to them the extreme of that error into which they are supposed to have fallen.

Secondly,
 the use of
 different
 lunar
 cycles.

It is plain that the difference here noticed between the Irish and Romans in their method of determining Easter-day, might lead to a week's difference in the time of observing it, when one party would have it on the fourteenth and another on the twenty-first day of the moon. But the

* As if the Paschal week had been ordained to commence on the *thirteenth* day at evening. See Bed. Ec. Hist. iii. 25.

† Bed. Hist. Ec. iii. 4, 17.—Steph. in Vit. Wilfrid. cap. x.—Eadmer. Vit. Wilf. § 13.

second circumstance above alluded to occasioned sometimes a still wider disagreement in this respect; in order to explain which it will be needful very briefly to consider the method which they used in finding the moon's age. If the full moons* were to fall on the same days of the months in all years, the Passover-day could be easily determined; for instance, if the first full moon (on or) after the 21st of March were always to fall on the 24th of that month, then Easter Sunday would be always the Sunday in the week from March 25th, to March 31st; it would be in fact the last Sunday in March. But it is well known that the full moons fall on different days in different years, so that whatever days they may fall on in the present; year for example, they will not come on exactly the same days of the months for several years again. In order therefore to determine on what days they will occur in coming years, different *cycles* (or periods of so many years) have been invented, after the expiration of which the new and full moons were found to fall again on the same days as before. Now the Irish used in their calculation of the moon's age, what was called the cycle of Sulpicius Severus,† (being so named from its inventor,) which consisted of

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The difference in this respect explained.

* N. B.—“*The full moon*,” the expression now commonly used among us in these calculations, answers to “*the fourteenth of the moon*” in the rule at p. 192, above. See pp. 190, 191.

† See Prideaux, as above quoted, *Ussher's Religion of A. I.* and *Lanigan*, vol. ii. p. 378.

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eighty-four years ; but the Romans (at the period of which we write) regulated their calculations by the cycle of Anatolius, which consisted of nineteen years ; it was much more correct than the other, and was ultimately established for the general rule by which Easter should be determined. It is also the rule which, with some little corrections, is still followed for this purpose ; and it is so nearly accurate, that after every nineteen years the new and full moon fall on the same days as before, and within an hour and a half of the same time of the day.*

It might
cause a
month's
interval
between the
two Easters.

It is very easy to see here, how great a difference might arise from the disagreement between those cycles, since a day, or even some hours more or less, in the moon's age, might give rise to a month's distance between the days marked by the two cycles respectively for the celebration of Easter ; for if the full moon were to fall on the 21st of March according to the one cycle, while the other assigned it to the 20th of March, the Sunday following that full moon would be Easter, according to the first method, while according to the second, Easter would be the Sunday after the next full moon, or a month

* This cycle being multiplied by 28 (the number of years in the cycle of the Sunday letter) gives the *Victorian Period*, or cycle of 532 years, mentioned by Cummián in his letter. (Pag. 154. *supra*.) See *Wheatly on the Common Prayer*, *ut sup.*, and *Prideaux*. As far as the moon's age on any given day of the year was concerned, the cycle of 19 years, and that of 532 were in theory the same.

later. And accordingly St. Cummean, as we have seen, mentions, that in one year, a little before the date of his letter to Segienus on this subject, while the Egyptians, Grecians, Hebrews, and Scythians, and all the world, were agreed in keeping Easter at the same time, the Irish were disjoined from them by the space of a whole month.*

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What has been here said on this subject will enable the reader to understand sufficiently the nature of the controversy about Easter that was agitated between the Irish and Roman Christians in Britain in the seventh century. The account we have given of their differences is taken principally from Bede, who was of course fully acquainted with the nature of the question, (it being agitated in his own lifetime,) and who also states it with his usual admirable clearness. As to the changes and corrections made by the Romans themselves, in different ages, in their own computations, and their differences with other nations, that is a very difficult subject, and one which we need not here meddle with.†

Remark on the account of this dispute here given.

This matter being now sufficiently explained, we may next inquire what was the nature of the dispute about the tonsure which was usually connected with it; and this a few words will serve

The difference about the tonsure explained.

* Vid. pag. 162. sup.

† Lanigan, vol. ii. p. 371, has a good deal on this subject.

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to describe. The Irish used to shave or clip very close the hair in front of the head from ear to ear, allowing it to grow behind; and in this consisted their tonsure: the Romans on the other hand were accustomed to shave the hair from the top, leaving only a circle of it to grow round the head at the lowermost part; and this was the Roman tonsure, which they of that party professed to have derived from St. Peter.*

Antiquity
of the
Paschal
controversy

S. Polycarp's
interview
with
Anicetus;
and its
result.

Intolerance
of Pope
Victor;

The controversy about Easter commenced at a very early period between the Asiatics and Romans; and so soon as the middle of the second century, the venerable St. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, came to Rome to confer with Anicetus, bishop of that city, about several matters, of which this was one: their meeting however proved unsuccessful, as far as the hope of terminating the dispute was concerned; for neither could persuade the other to adopt his system; only they agreed, as became Christian bishops, that the bond of peace and brotherly kindness was not to be broken for such an unworthy cause as a question of this sort would be. But Pope Victor towards the conclusion of this century, who was far less moderate than his predecessor Anicetus had been, took upon him to command the Asiatic bishops to conform to the western

* Lanigan, Ec. Hist. iii. 68. Hofmanni Lexicon Univ. in voce *Tonsura*. Vid. Appendix, No. III.

Churches, and when they resolutely refused to do so, he hesitated not to thunder forth an excommunication against them. Such violence did not however meet with the approbation of the more wise and moderate men of that day, and it was attended with little effect.*

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not generally
approved of.

When we look back on those ancient controversies that occupied so much of the time and attention of our forefathers, and view them with the calm and dispassionate feelings with which we can regard the events of distant times, it is astonishing to think how Christian men could ever have contended so warmly about such unimportant trifles as those subjects are now felt to be by men of all parties. Of the tonsure the learned Romanist Mabillon remarks, that "a small matter as it now appears, and one that may seem scarce worth a serious consideration, then involved those islanders in sharp altercation;"† and again of this business and the Paschal controversy, he expresses himself thus—"A question then about one day occupied the Church for nearly six hundred years; and three centuries at least, were scarcely sufficient for settling the hair of quarrelsome men."

The things
thus disputed
very unimportant;

Yet inconsiderable as were the causes of disagreement between these men, they were treated

but yet
otherwise
thought of
in those
days.

* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. v. cap. 24.

† Pref. ad. Acta Sanctorum O.S.B. See also Lanigan, ii. 69.

A. D. 664.

and spoken of as matters of the most serious importance. A difference about the tonsure and Easter was regarded with as much abhorrence as if it had been some grave corruption of doctrine or perversion of the faith. The man who could think of the fourteenth of the moon as being a fit day for a festival, was looked upon as sympathising after some sort with the Jews, who crucified the son of God; and he that used the Irish tonsure was charged with having borrowed it from the odious Simon Magus.*

Ancient
view of the
importance
of these
questions.

Eadmer says, (following the words of Bede,) "in Colman's times there was sharp controversy about the observing of Easter, and other rules of life for churchmen; therefore this question deservedly excited the minds and feelings of many people, fearing lest perhaps after having received the name of Christians, they *should run or had run in vain.*"†

A point
however of
real consequence
at issue.

Still however, while there was so much said about things of less material consequence, we must not omit to observe that there was a matter of much greater importance at issue, although it was little brought directly into the controversy; and this was the independence of our ancient churches in these islands. We have already seen how well disposed Augustine was to deprive the British

* Aldhelmi. Ep. ad Gerunt. Bed. E. H. v. 22.

† Vit. Wlfrid. § 13. Bed. Ec. Hist. iii. 25.

bishops of their liberty, and how resolutely they opposed this intention of his, although it was not one of the things mentioned as having been formally or directly proposed by him at their meeting that they should submit to his jurisdiction ; and throughout the controversy the policy of both sides appeared to continue pretty much the same, the Roman party endeavouring to extend their influence and authority, but in such a way as not to make the necessity of submission to their head the chief subject of debate ; and the Britons, &c., on the other hand feeling that their liberty was attempted to be encroached upon, and being resolved to resist the disposition manifested by their opponents to tyrannise, by forcing one independent Church to submit to the discipline of another, in matters which were left indifferent by our Lord and his apostles. " They were used to say that Rome ought to yield in matters which were of human institution, rather than break peace ; provided that the law of God, the faith, the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, were maintained in their purity ; these latter having been delivered by Christ himself, the instructor and light of the life of man."* These are the words used in describing their feelings by Mantuanus, an eminent Carmelite friar and poet who flourished in the year 1494.

A. D. 664.

The Britons
argued for
Christian
liberty in
things indif-
ferent.

* Ussher's Religion of A. I. chap. x.

A. D. 690.

The Britons
and Irish no
Catholics,
according
to the views
of the Ro-
man party.

Extract
from the
letter of
Aldhelm.

The Britons and their party were considered by those of the other side to have cut themselves off from the body of the Catholic Church, and this is constantly stated or implied by the various writers of the Roman party. Thus Aldhelm, in the letter already quoted, says, "what avail the advantages of good works if they be performed outside the Catholic Church."* The close of the same letter of Aldhelm expresses so curiously the importance attached by the Roman party to their tonsure and Easter, that I cannot help introducing a sentence or two here in illustration of this particular—"If then," exclaims this writer, "the keys of the kingdom of Heaven were conferred on Peter by Christ . . . who that despises the principal statutes of his Church and disregards her doctrinal decrees, can enter with joy through the gate of the heavenly paradise? and if it was his happy lot and peculiar privilege to be thought worthy of receiving the power of binding and monarchy of loosing in heaven and earth, who that refuses to adopt the rule of the Paschal festival and the method of tonsure used by Rome, can by any possibility think but that he is to be bound hereafter with the tight chains that can never be loosed, instead of being mercifully pardoned. But perhaps some of your ingenious book leaders and ready-witted arguers out of the Scrip-

* See also Bed. Ec. Hist. iv. 1., v. 20.

tures will defend himself with such a shield of excuse, and guard himself with a buckler of apology such as this, saying, 'I reverence with sincere faith the precepts of both Old and New Testament, and confess my heartfelt belief in the one essence, and one substance, and threefold existence of persons, in the Holy Trinity. The sacred mystery of the Lord's Incarnation, and the cross of his passion, and his triumphant Resurrection, I will preach freely among the people; I will be careful to tell them of the last judgment of quick and dead, when every individual shall have assigned to him a retribution of one kind or another in accordance with mens' different deservings, adjusted by the nicest scales of equity; and by the privilege I enjoy in holding this faith, I shall be entitled to a place among the company of Catholics without hindrance or gainsay.' But I must exert myself," continues Aldhelm, "to break down and dash to pieces the bulwark of this excuse, (which they trust in as being sufficient to hide and protect them,) levelling it to the ground with the engine of apostolic reprimand. For St. James saith *that faith without works is dead*; and the Catholic faith and brotherly kindness ever go inseparably hand in hand. And to close the whole business with the bolt of one short sentence, that man makes a vain and empty brag of the Catholic faith, who does not follow the decree and

A. D. 690.

A pure faith
no sufficient
test of a true
churchman
in his mind.

A. D. 690.

This dispute
was chiefly
about rites,
&c., not
doctrines.

rule of St. Peter." "For although," adds the writer of this letter, "the foundation of the Church was laid primarily in Christ, it was in a secondary sense laid in Peter also, when it was said to him, *Thou art Peter and on this rock I will build my Church.*" The letter from which I have made such large extracts, furnishes us with a curious specimen of a controversial argument of the seventh century, bearing in some degree on the question of the supremacy of the Church of Rome. We may see clearly from it, that at the time when it was written, those of that Church had no fault to find with the doctrines of their opponents, but only with their customs and discipline; the man who was not shorn crown-wise being no Catholic in the estimation of those who were more violent and active on the Roman side of the controversy. That the two parties agreed at first in their general doctrines upon all important points of faith is also very evident from the account given us by Bede of the intercourse which took place between Augustine and the British bishops; they acknowledging that it was the true way of righteousness which he taught; and he for his part evincing a desire to have them as helpers in preaching the Gospel to the heathen, provided only that they would submit to his authority, and agree to a satisfactory settlement of their ceremonial differences.

On the whole, whatever violence or passion may have been manifested by any persons in these unworthy contests, it is certain that the more piously inclined and moderate on both sides were willing to recognise in each other the Christian character, and to treat one another with the respect and love due to fellow members of the Church of God. Thus for instance Venerable Bede, although being himself one of the Roman communion, yet speaks most highly of the faith and piety of Aidan, not however without apologising to his own friends for bestowing such praise on one that belonged to a schismatical body. He says, that he "detested exceedingly" the false Paschal system which Aidan supported, but yet that he could not help recording, as an honest historian, his many and eminent virtues; his gentle, affectionate spirit, his humility and self-denial, and untiring zeal for good works. "He was one," says Bede, "who, as far as we could learn from those that knew him, endeavoured not to omit any of those duties that he had learned in the writings of the Evangelists, or Apostles, or Prophets, but to fulfil them all to the best of his ability;" and however he might have been in the wrong about Easter, "yet even here," adds the same writer, "I must admire this point in his conduct, that in the celebration of his Paschal festival, no other object occupied his heart, his

A. D. 664.

A degree of moderation observed by some of those concerned in this controversy.

A. D. 664.

adoration, or his discourses, than that which occupies ourselves, namely, the Redemption of mankind by the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven, of the Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.”*

Character
of the Irish
party in ge-
neral at that
time.

The characters which most strongly marked the Irish party in this controversy, were those of great energy and missionary zeal, warmth of feeling and simplicity of heart and purpose, strong attachment to what was recommended to them by the customs and usage of their forefathers, (and that even where such customs were inconvenient or objectionable,) much love for teaching, and diligence in the instruction of youth, and above all, great devotedness to the study of the sacred Scriptures, and sincere earnestness in carrying their precepts into practice, for which they are continually commended by those ancient writers who have had occasion to make mention of them.

Advantages
possessed by
the Roman
party.

The Roman party on the other hand, had also their advantages, though somewhat of a different sort, which they used most successfully in forwarding their own influence, and weakening that of their opponents. Their views were propagated by some of the most considerable and influential persons of that age, the few writings that remain to us from their time having been chiefly composed by learned men who were of that way of

Their learn-
ing,

* Ec. Hist. iii. 17.

thinking ; as for instance, Cummian, Adamnanus, Aldhelm, Wilfrid's biographer Æddi, and Bede. A. D. 664.
 The Irish of the other side appear to have been more given to active work, (at least such of them as laboured in England,) than to the composition of books. Further, the English and Roman party were more attentive to canonical order, ecclesiastical rules, regularity in ordinations, carefulness in the arrangement of Church authority, &c. ; not but that the Irish were strict enough in their scholastic discipline, and esteemed abroad on this account, but yet it was more after a way of their own, and with less of respect for the general system of the Church elsewhere ; so that as clergymen they were considered by many to be irregular and wanting in attention to propriety and order. canonical regularity,

Moreover, although singing in divine service was not entirely neglected by the Irish, yet they seem not to have brought it to much perfection : and the Romans who cultivated it a good deal, had accordingly, a considerable advantage over them in this respect ; a circumstance to which Bede alludes in many places of his Church History. And in the same way, with regard to the building of churches, the Irish were not backward in promoting this work according to their means and ability : but they were much inferior in architectural taste and experience, as well as taste for music,
and for Church architecture, &c.

A. D. 664.

in love for decorating and ornamenting churches, to their opponents of the other party ; which also is sufficiently illustrated by the statements of the writer above referred to.

The Roman or Gregorian style of Church music, taught in Britain by James, the deacon, A.D. 633.

Thus, we are told that James, the deacon, who was brought into Northumberland by the Roman missionary Paulinus, " was a first-rate singer of Church music, and instructed numbers in chanting after the manner of the Roman or Kentish Christians."* Again, having mentioned the learned Theodore, who was appointed archbishop of Canterbury, in A.D. 668, by Pope Vitalian, Bede says, that " from his time they began to learn in all the churches of England, the method of chanting Church music, which had been hitherto known only in Kent ; and with the exception of James above-mentioned, the first singing-master of the Northumbrian churches was Æddi, surnamed Stephen, that had been invited out of Kent by the most reverend Wilfrid, who was the first of the bishops of the English race to introduce the Catholic system of life into the Anglican churches." And in the same chapter of Bede's history we read of Wilfrid's ordaining to the bishopric of Rochester, one Putta, a simple-minded, well meaning person, and of studious character, " but especially well skilled in chanting the Church service after the method of the

by Æddi, A.D. 669.

and Putta, bishop of Rochester :

* Bed. Ec. Hist. ii. 20.

Romans, which he had learned from the disciples of Pope Gregory." Putta was afterwards driven from his see by the calamities of war, and retired contentedly to the charge of an obscure church in Mercia; and there "he used to go about wherever he was invited, to give instructions in Church music."* A. D. 668.

But the most distinguished musical teacher in England about this time was one John, precentor of St. Peter's at Rome, and abbot of St. Martin's, who came over to Britain by direction of Pope Agatho, at the request of Benedict Biscop, abbot of Wearmouth, in Durham. This person got John to come and "teach in his monastery, the annual course of chanting, as performed at St. Peter's, Rome. And Abbot John did as he had received directions from the pontiff, both by instructing the singers of the said monastery in the order and system of chanting and reading music, and also by committing to writing such services as were required for the celebration of all the festivals throughout the year. And these services have been heretofore kept in the same monastery, and they have been also copied out by many persons in every part of the country. And not only did the same John instruct the brethren of that monastery, but also there came to hear

also by John,
precentor of
St. Peter's,
Rome,
A.D. 680.

* *ib.* iv. 2. et 12.

A. D. 680.

him, from almost all the monasteries of the same province, such as were skilful in chanting. And further many took care to invite himself to different places in order to give instructions in his art.”*

Church architecture, &c., cultivated by the Roman Christians in Britain.

Under the care of Aidan and his Irish helpers many churches were built in the Northumbrian realm ; and his successor Finan did not neglect carrying on the same necessary work ; for we find that he erected one at Lindisfarne, which although constructed of oak and covered with thatch of reeds, was yet in those simple days judged “a convenient one for the episcopal see.”† But the Saxon bishop Eadbert afterwards removed the thatch, and covered both roof and sides with sheet lead, and “Archbishop Theodore dedicated it in honor of the apostle St. Peter.” Again, we are told of Acca, Wilfrid’s successor, that “he was a man of the greatest energy, and magnificent in the sight of God and man ; who also beautified his own church, which was consecrated in honor of the apostle St. Andrew, with decorations of various kinds, and ornaments of exquisite workmanship. For he exerted himself, and does so still,” says Bede, “to collect from every quarter, relics of the blessed apostles and martyrs of Christ : and in honor of these he erects altars,

* ib. iv. 18.

† ib. iii. 25.

with porticoes for the purpose, partitioned from each other, within the walls of the said church. And moreover, he has collected histories of their passions, together with other ecclesiastical works, with very great industry, so as to form there a most noble and copious library. Besides he has also provided for the place, holy vessels, and lamps, and other things of the kind, belonging to the furnishing of God's house, with all possible diligence. He also got over a celebrated singer named Maban, that had learned singing from the successors of Pope Gregory's disciples in Kent, to instruct himself and his people; and kept him for twelve years, both to teach them those Church tunes which they had not before learned, and also to restore to their original state those which had been long known, but which through constant use or negligence had fallen into a corrupt state."*

A. D. 710.

Acca gets Maban to teach the Gregorian chanting at Hexham, A. D. 710.

Again, when Naitan, king of the Picts, renounced his Irish errors, and resolved on adopting "the Catholic Easter," he made application on the subject to Ceolfrid, abbot of Wearmouth, (and successor to Biscop above mentioned,) requesting his advice and aid in the matter;† and he at the same time "begged that architects might be sent to him, to build him a church of massive stone, after the mode of the Romans, promising that

The taste for Church architecture extends to the Picts.

* ib. v. 21. † This seems to have been in A. D. 710, although by Baronius it is referred to A. D. 699. See Collier, Ec. Hist. i. 272.

A. D. 710.

it should be dedicated in honor of the blessed prince of the apostles : and moreover, that he himself and all his people would ever for the future follow the system of the holy Roman and Apostolic Church," so far as they could learn it in their distant land.*

The first church at Ripon, erected by Wilfrid, about A.D. 670.

Its consecration ;

Æddi's Life of Wilfrid also gives us much information, in various places, concerning the kind of taste in church building and ornamenting, that prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons of this period. To select a single instance ; this writer gives a full account of the first erection of a church at Ripon, by Wilfrid. It was all "built of polished stone from the foundation to the roof, and supported on columns and porches, variously adorned." And then for the consecration of it, Wilfrid invited together King Egfrid and his brother, with abbots, lords, and nobles, and authorities of every sort : and the edifice was "dedicated to the Lord in honor of St. Peter, prince of the Apostles." Then "having dedicated the altar too with its basement, and having covered it with purple embroidered with gold, and the people having communicated, they thus completed every thing in a canonical way." After this, Wilfrid, (who is styled by his biographer "an evangelical preacher,"†) delivered a discourse,

* Bed. E. H. v. 21.

† Æddi, Vit. Wilf. cap. 40.

"standing before the altar with his face to the people:" his subject being, as Æddi mentions, the donations of land and property with which King Egfrid and others before him had endowed the Church "for the good of their souls." The sermon having been ended, the princes and all the people there assembled, "repaired to a grand entertainment that lasted for three days and three nights." Wilfrid also we are told presented to the new church, "for the benefit of his soul," a splendid manuscript of the Four Gospels, such as had never been heard of there before that time. The work was in letters of gold, on vellum ornamented with purple and other beautiful colours; and it was provided with a case of pure gold, set with most precious gems.* The writer who records these particulars, elsewhere mentions that on different occasions when at Rome, Wilfrid procured from devout persons there, quantities of relics "for the consolation of the Churches of Britain," with notes on each descriptive of the several saints to which they belonged; and that he also bought in the same city, vestments of purple and silk for sacred uses, to bring over with him to his native land.†

A. D. 670.

followed by
three days
feasting.Wilfrid's
present to
the new
church.

* *ib.* cap. 17. See *Churton's History of the Early English Church*, p. 78, &c., where will be found a good deal of interesting information on the subject before us.

† Ædd. Vit. Wilf. cap. 53.

A. D. 664.

Serious errors already beginning to appear at this period.

The circumstances here mentioned about Wilfrid, furnish us with curious evidences of the religious taste of the man who boasted of having been the one to root out of England "the poison-buds planted by the Irish."* We may also see in the extracts adduced, very plain indications of a departure, even at this early period, from the simplicity and purity of the faith received by the apostles and their first followers. It must indeed be confessed with pain and sorrow, that although as yet free from some of the grosser corruptions of later times, Christianity had already in Wilfrid's age become obscured and sullied with a grave intermixture of error, as appears plainly enough from Bede's writings. Even then it was believed that the building of a place, "where daily prayers should be offered to the Lord for the redemption of the souls" of men who were already dead,† was a worthy act of Christian piety, and one calculated in some sense to atone for the crime of a departed sinner: and that the giving of land for the endowment of a monastery was profitable "for the redemption of the soul."‡ As to a future state, it was supposed that there was a sort of purgatory for the souls of such as repented of their sins at the very

Anglo-Saxon views of purgatory.

* *Ædd. Vit. Wilf. cap. 45.* † *Bed. E. H. lib. iii. cap. 14.*

‡ *Vit. S. Cuthb. cap. 7.*

moment of death, and that these having been tortured for a time, were all to be admitted to the joys of heaven at the day of judgment; or even before it, by the aid of the "prayers of the living, their alms and fasting, and especially the celebration of masses:" further, that of those who lived a life of good works, the more perfect only attained to the kingdom of heaven at once, while others were first admitted to a preparatory and temporary state of bliss.* Nor did Bede himself shrink from adopting the sentiment, that one "might correct the errors of childhood and hide them from the eyes of God by the good works of riper years; so as thus to be numbered with the company of those concerning whom the Psalmist says, *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered.*†

A. D. 664.

Such were some of the religious views that prevailed or were springing up among the English and Roman Christians at the close of the seventh century. But the reader will here be inclined to ask with interest, did the Irish then of the same age hold similar sentiments, and were they also thus far gone from the simplicity of Christ's teaching. This would be an interesting subject to pursue at length; but in a work of such narrow limits as the present, a few short observations on it must suffice.

Whether
the Irish
held exactly
the same
opinions.

* Bed. E. H. v. 13.

† ib. cap. 14.

A. D. 664.

That they
did so, not
capable of
proof.

Purgatory
not held by
St. Columba
nor Adam-
nanus.

There is no sufficient historical proof that the errors above specified were embraced by the Irish of the seventh century. Their religious views were not necessarily identical in all respects with those of the Anglo-Roman Church: on the contrary we see how fiercely the two parties contended about a matter like that of Easter, which they regarded as a most important point of faith; and how utterly opposed they were to each other in their opinions concerning the unity of the Church, and the value of communion with Rome. The tone of piety cultivated by those of the one side, was evidently very different from that cherished by the other; and the simpler habits of the Irish, and simpler character of their religious life, seem like indications of a simpler faith on their part. So far as purgatory is concerned, it appears most certain, from the third book of St. Columba's life by Adamnanus, that neither the Saint nor his biographer contemplated the existence of such a place: no allusion whatever being made to it there, although constant mention is made of death and of a future state, of heaven and hell. The doctrine of justification, and the connection between it and the good works of man, are subjects on which the statements of Adamnanus, and the views attributed by him to St. Columba, are more exceptionable, and more akin to the errors above noticed.*

* Adam. vit. S. Columbae, lib. iii. cap. 9 et 10.

But it may be objected, that as far as these erroneous tenets are concerned, the Irish and Roman Christians in England must have been entirely agreed, as they seem to have had no controversy about these points. This objection however can be easily met. When persons contend hotly about trifles, they are too often in danger of overlooking things of greater importance: and thus, the undue weight given to the subject of Easter by those of whom we speak, would naturally lead them so to occupy their thoughts with it, as to forget what was of real consequence. Yet they may at the same time have differed also in other matters, the value of which was proportionably underrated in the contest. And as all the principal accounts of the disagreement which have been handed down to us, are by writers of the Roman side, they are for this reason less likely to afford us exact and satisfactory illustrations of the views of their opponents.

Again it may be objected that since great numbers of the English in the seventh century came over to be educated in Ireland, they must therefore have entirely agreed in their religious views with those whom they chose for teachers, and so highly esteemed: and such an argument has in fact been made use of to prove that the Irish of that time acknowledged the pope's

A. D. 664.

An objection to this view, from the absence of controversy on these points, answered.

A similar objection, from the friendship of the English and Irish, replied to.

A. D. 664.

authority over themselves, as much as the Roman Christians in England did.* But this argument, if good for any thing, would prove too much ; it would go to prove that on a point of such vast importance as that of Easter was, according to their views, the two parties must have been perfectly unanimous ; for how should they commit the education of their children to the followers of a system which they “detested exceedingly,”† and “anathematized.”‡ But since we know that the Irish did so generally disagree with them about Easter, and yet were thought worthy to be entrusted with the care of young English persons of a different way of thinking, in that respect ; it is just as possible for them to have differed as widely in sentiments on any other subject, and the same sort of intercourse to have gone on notwithstanding.

The real
state of the
case ex-
plained.

There is indeed no real difficulty in accounting for the state of things here alluded to. For if any who belonged to the Roman party thought it unsafe to give the training of their children to those who were contaminated with the supposed errors of the Britons and Irish, still they might have sent them to Ireland for their education, as they could have found there (after what has been already said) plenty of teachers of their own way of thinking, and attached to the customs

* See Todd's Church of St. Patrick, p. 75. † vid. p. 205, sup. ‡ p. 183.

and general system of Rome ; and that especially among the more learned members of the community.* Moreover, education by the Irish was not always followed by an adoption of the entire Irish system in religious matters ; as even Wilfrid himself was first instructed by Irish teachers, and others also that might be named in like manner, who yet in the end rejected the Irish customs. Many too of the English could tolerate a difference in this respect, with men whose whole life was so devotedly spent in the service of God, as was that of Aidan, and Finan, and others of the Irish who had laboured in their country.

A. D. 664.

According to what was said at the close of the last chapter, we have judged it needless to bring before the reader any account of the general facts of Wilfrid's life, as they are things of less importance to our present subject. There are however circumstances connected with his latter years which it may be well to allude to here, as a brief notice of some of them may throw additional light on the controversies of which we have been speaking, and form a suitable conclusion to the history of them already given.

State of parties in Wilfrid's latter days considered.

Although the conference at Whitby appears to have settled the question about Easter as far as the kingdom of Northumberland was concerned, it was nevertheless very far from putting an end

Continuance of the disputes in Northumberland, after the Synod of Whitby.

* pp. 146, 164, sup.

A. D. 701. to all disputes in the Church of that country. For so late as the beginning of the eighth century we find there still in existence, an influential party, who were as strongly opposed to Wilfrid and his views of Church authority as ever. This resolute old man, although now nearly seventy years of age and forty years a bishop, was still displaying the same character as had been observable in him at Whitby, and still retained much of the passionate spirit of his youth. Confident in his own opinions, earnest and straightforward, as all must allow, but arbitrary and imperious in his bearing, he was constantly engaged in unhappy broils with a large portion of the clergy and people of Britain. Both Æddi and Bede commend him very highly for his great piety and many graces; but he seems to have been wanting in that winning gentleness of spirit and demeanour by which the good Aidan had gained so much on the affections of the Northumbrian people.

Wilfrid's
authority
still resisted
by a strong
party.
A.D. 701.

Now it appears from the statements of the two writers just mentioned, that the persons who opposed Wilfrid in A.D. 701, were not exactly identical with the old Irish party of A.D. 644; for they had heartily adopted the Roman Easter, and were now living in good communion with the rest of the Anglo-Saxon Christians; and moreover they enjoyed for a time the countenance

and aid of Archbishop Theodore himself, who although appointed by the pope's nomination, yet encouraged these opponents of Wilfrid here spoken of, in their resistance to the decrees of several popes ; with a view it would seem, of weakening Wilfrid's power, and thereby extending his own influence in the north of England. The party thus encouraged by Theodore saw fully no doubt that the Roman mode of calculating Easter was the more correct one ; and they had therefore a horror of those who still kept up a contention in favor of the old method ; (which was at this time abandoned by almost all of the Irish themselves.) But yet though agreeing with the Romans in this respect, they seem to have still retained in many cases no small portion of the old feelings implanted among them by the Irish teachers with whom they had studied. And in particular they had not yet learned the lesson of ready obedience to the pope's authority, which Wilfrid was so anxious to impart to them ; but on the contrary shewed an entire disregard (as was above intimated) of the injunctions of different popes contained in letters of theirs brought from Rome by Wilfrid himself. One of the most eminent persons belonging to the class here spoken of was the celebrated St. Cuthbert already mentioned.

A. D. 701.

A. D. 701.
 They procure his banishment from Northumberland ;

Through their influence with Alfrid, king of Northumberland, Wilfrid's enemies found means in A.D. 688, to procure his banishment from that realm, not now for the first time.* Afterwards in A.D. 701, he attended a synod "of bishops from almost all Britain," convened by King Alfrid and Berthwald archbishop of Canterbury, having been invited by them to come and confer with them about matters disputed between himself and others there present.† Here "he took occasion to reprove them with many and severe censures, for their pertinacious obstinacy in venturing to trouble the apostolic authority with their contentious resistance for the last two-and-twenty years : and he asked them with what sort of effrontery they could presume to prefer the decrees of Archbishop Theodore to the apostolic ordinances of the most holy popes, Agatho, Benedict, and Sergius." After much altercation, the synod here mentioned (which was held at a place called Onestresfield) ended without any satisfactory arrangement of the points at issue. When it was over, Wilfrid returned to his exile, and his opponents appear to have been only confirmed in their opposition to him.

and treat him as excommunicated.

Æddi gives us‡ the following account of their behaviour at this crisis. "Our enemies," says

* Ædd. V. W. cap. 44.

† ib. cap. 45.

‡ ib. cap. 47.

he, "who had seized for themselves the inheritance of our holy bishop, gave out that we and all who would have any dealings with us, were separated from the society of the faithful: and to such a length did they carry their execration of our communion, that if any of our abbots or priests, invited by one of the faithful among the people, were to bless his own meal, set before himself, with the sign of the cross of God, they would have such food cast out and thrown away, as if it had been offered to an idol; and the sacred vessels that had been used by those of our party they would order to be washed, as if stained with defilement, before allowing others to use them." From this curious passage it would seem that some in those days objected to the use of the sign of the cross as employed by Wilfrid's friends. It had however prevailed very much even from the earliest period; and Adamnanus attributes it to St. Columba on different occasions, both as an accompaniment of blessing, and for the performance of wonderful works.

A. D. 701.

The hatred against Wilfrid above described by Æddi, lasted not very long; for he was soon afterwards entirely reconciled to King Alfrid and the prelates of Britain; all matters of dispute between them having been finally adjusted at the Synod of Nidd, held in A.D. 705, just three years before Wilfrid's death.* In taking our leave

Wilfrid and his opponents are reconciled.

* *ib.* cap. 58.

A. D. 705.
His mission-
ary labours.

of this remarkable man, it is right to mention (lest we should seem willing to conceal his merits) that he was possessed of much missionary zeal and activity, and laboured not unsuccessfully in preaching in different Pagan states. For on one occasion, when on his way to Rome, having been driven on the shore of Friesland, he brought over thousands of the Heathen of that place to the profession of Christianity. And again after his return to England, and when he was banished for the first time from the Northumbrian realm, he spent part of his exile among the South Saxons, preaching and labouring among them, until by his means they were led to acknowledge the same faith.*

CHAP. VII.

OF THE ANCIENT MONASTERIES OF IRELAND.

Before
A. D. 325.
Account of
the first
monasteries,
and their
connection
with our
subject.

IT is impossible to write an account of the early Church in Ireland, (or indeed in any part of the world,) without having occasion to make frequent mention of monks and monasteries, inasmuch as many of those who occupy the most distinguished places in the annals of ancient Christianity were the zealous patrons and propagators of the monastic system. Of this the reader may have seen

* *ib. capp. 25 et 40.*

several instances in the preceding pages : but he will form a very mistaken idea indeed of the lives and habits and discipline of these ancient worthies who are here alluded to, if he judges of them by what we hear and read of the corruptions and abuses of the later monks and the friars who lived shortly before the time of the Reformation, and since that period. In order to avoid misconception on a subject concerning which there is so little generally known, it will be desirable to introduce in this place a brief account of the origin of the monastic life in general, with a somewhat more particular description of the ancient Irish monks who lived in the times which we have been considering in the preceding pages, that is, in the seventh century and previously.

A. D. 325.

It is freely admitted by the most earnest upholders of the Reformed religion that the early monks of whom we speak, whatever there may have been erroneous in their system, were so far from being indolent or lazy, or of corrupt habits, that they were on the contrary men of industrious, exemplary, and holy lives, devoted to exercises of piety and good works, abounding in fasting and prayer, diligent in the study and meditation of God's blessed Word, and constant in their teaching the same to the people, men who supported themselves by the labour of their own

Character
and habits
of these first
monks.

A. D. 325.

Fuller's
commendation
of them.

hands, in silence working and eating their own bread, and all the while submitting themselves to the rules of a most strict and rigid discipline.* "They had," says Fuller, in his own style, "hard hands and tender hearts, sustaining themselves by their labour, and relieving others by their charity:" and again, of the British monks of Bangor, he says, that they were "a spectacle of virtue and continence, who although they received nothing, or any thing very unwillingly, of others, yet were so far from wanting necessaries, that by their pains they provided sustenance for many poor people, orphans, widows, and strangers."† Many other passages might be adduced from writers of the Reformed faith, who have spoken of these ancient monks in similar terms of high commendation; but our narrow limits oblige us to omit any further matter of this kind at present, in order to pass on to what is more important.

No monks,
but ascetics
only, in the
first three
ages.

The regular system of monastic life appears to have been not fully established in the Church until toward the fourth century. Previously to that time there had indeed existed among Christians a class of persons called ascetics, who were like the monks in some respects, and have for this reason been confounded with them by some

* See Fuller's Church Hist., book vi. sec. 1. Collier, E. H. vol. iv. p. 53. Ussher's Rel. of A. L. chap. vi. Bingham's Antiq., book vii., &c.

† Fuller, ut sup.

writers: but it is notwithstanding sufficiently ascertained that the two sorts of characters here named were entirely distinct and different from one another. The *ascetics*, as their name implies, were *men who exercised themselves* in more than ordinary acts of piety, and were distinguished from the generality of professing Christians around them only by such marks as greater degrees of fasting and abstinence, more constancy in prayer and devotion, more self-denying charity, or in fact unusual austerities of any kind, practised for the promotion of piety. Thus Anna the prophetess, *who departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayer night and day*, is by an ancient writer called "a most religious ascetic."* But the persons designated by this name were originally "not monks, but men of all orders, that freely chose such a way of living as engaged them upon some austerities, without deserting their station or business in the world, whether it were ecclesiastical or secular, that they were otherwise engaged in."†

A. D. 325.

What the ascetics were.

Such was the ascetic life as practised by some Christians in the first three centuries. But the monastic system as we have already said, was altogether unknown until towards the fourth century, when it originated in the following manner:

The monastic system originally created by persecution;

* St. Cyril of Jerusalem, A. D. 348. Catech. x. n. 19. Opp. Ed. Par. 1720. p. 146.

† Bingham's Ant., book vii. ch. i. sec. 2.

A. D. 325.

and first organised by
Pacomius.

In the time of the Decian persecution of the Church about the middle of the third century, "many persons in Egypt, to avoid the fury of the storm, fled to the neighbouring deserts and mountains, where they not only found a safe retreat, but also more time and liberty to exercise themselves in acts of piety" and religious contemplation. And this sort of life though at first forced upon them by necessity, became so agreeable to some of them, that when the persecution was over, they would not return to their ancient habitations again, but chose rather to continue in those cottages or cells which they had made themselves in the wilderness. As yet however these were only single persons scattered here and there in the deserts of Egypt, until Pacomius and Antony, in the peaceable reign of Constantine, when the persecution was over, established some monasteries in that country, where men might live together in communities, according to certain fixed rules : a system which was afterwards followed in other parts of the world in succeeding ages. It thus appears that until the year 250, there were no monks, but only ascetics in the Church ; from that time to the reign of Constantine, monachism was confined to the anchorets living in private cells in the wilderness ; but when Pacomius had erected monasteries in Egypt, other countries soon followed the example, and

the system before long came to its full maturity in the Church. The first monasteries in Italy were established by Athanasius, who came there in A.D. 340. Some time after, St. Martin, bishop of Tours, vigorously propagated the like system in France: from whence, according to some authors, Pelagius introduced it into Britain at the commencement of the fifth century.* But the most eminent organiser of such communities in Europe was the famous Italian monk Benedict, who flourished about the year 530. His order was propagated in the western Church with such success, that for six hundred years after his time, the greatest part of the European monks followed his rule; the most of those who went under such other names as Carthusians, Cluniacs, Cistercians, &c., being all but different branches of the Benedictines.†

A. D. 325.

The monks differed from the ancient ascetics chiefly in these three things; 1. The monks retired from the business and society of the world to private cells or lonely monasteries, whereas the ascetics were men of active life differing from those around them only in being devoted to the pursuit of higher degrees of spiritual attainment, and more uncommon exercises of Christian virtue. 2. The monks were for the most part no more than laymen, the solitude which they had chosen

Distinctions
between the
monks and
ascetics.

* Bingham, book vii. ch. i. sec. 4.

† ib. chap. ii. sec. 12.

A. D. 325.

for themselves being incompatible with the active duties of the pastoral office, whereas the ascetics were laymen or clergy indifferently. 3. The monks were subject to the private rules of the several societies in which they lived, while the ascetics were bound only by the general laws of the Gospel, or those of that part of the Church where they lived ; any further practices of theirs being voluntary on their part, and only pursued so far as they pleased.*

The first monks were mostly laymen.

Exceptions.

So much for the origin of the first monks, and the difference between them and the ascetics. Now a few words as to their habits and discipline. And first, it is to be observed that the original monks were generally laymen, as already stated, and never ordained to the clerical office, except in some particular cases : as for instance, when the number of monks in a monastery, or its remoteness from the parish church, made it convenient that one or more of the monks (and particularly the abbot, or head of the institution) should receive holy orders for the purpose of officiating in divine service among the brethren of the establishment ; who in some cases amounted to as many as five thousand, or even more, in one monastery. Again, monks were sometimes taken out of the monasteries and ordained for the service of the Church ; and in this case they usually

* Bing. Ant., book vii. ch. i. sec. 5.

continued their former austerities, so as to combine the clerical and monastic life. In fine it sometimes happened that a bishop and his clergy chose an ascetic way of living together by a voluntary renouncing of all property, and enjoying all things in common. The bishop's house in this case was converted into a monastery, an instance of which might be seen in the house of the famous St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, who led this sort of life with his clergy. But as yet there was no monastery in the world where all the monks were ordained for the performance of private masses, confined to a cloister, and having no public business or offices in the Church. Things were however altered afterwards in this respect, and in A.D. 1311, Pope Clement V. made it obligatory on all monks to take holy orders that they might be able to say private masses.*

A. D. 325.
—v—

As to any solemn vow or profession being required of these first monks at their admission, we find no such thing. All that was as yet done in that way was quite voluntary; and so St. Basil (who flourished in A.D. 360) says plainly, "that there was no express promise of celibacy taken of any, but they seemed only to promise it tacitly by becoming monks." And it is certain from the statements of both Athanasius and St. Augustine

No vows required of them.

* Bingham, book vii. ch. ii. sec. 7.

A. D. 325.

Married
monks men-
tioned by St.
Augustine.

Their
poverty not
compulsory.

that there were in their time some monks who lived in a married state.* The latter of these authors, writing against certain heretics who assumed the name of Apostolics, says that "they most arrogantly called themselves by that name, because they rejected from their communion, those who continued to keep company with their wives, or hold private property; of which sort," says Augustine, "the Catholic Church has very many, both monks and clergymen." And with regard to a vow of poverty, neither was this required of them; only it was customary in most cases for men entering into a community where they were to enjoy all things in common, to dispose voluntarily of their own estates to religious uses beforehand. Some however did not so renounce all property, but still kept possession of their estates, and yet enjoyed no more of the use of them than the others who parted with theirs, but spent their entire income in acts of benevolence and charity.† One thing however they were careful, for the most part, to avoid, which was the enriching themselves or their monasteries by accepting estates from others; and those who did this were severely censured for it by their stricter brethren. Further, as their entrance into the

* Athan. Ep. ad Dracont. tom. i. p. 268. Ed. Bened. Par. 1698. The letter of Athanasius here referred to was written, A.D. 354, or 355. Aug. de Hæres., cap. 40. Opp. tom i. col. 12. Ed. Bened. Bassani. 1807. Bingham, book vii. ch. ii. sec. 6.

† Vid. p. 125. *supra*.

monastic state was unaccompanied by any vow, A. D. 325.
 men might therefore afterwards quit it again, a
 case which sometimes occurred, either voluntarily
 or by expulsion.* In the gradual tendency of the
 system however, this state of things could not
 continue long, and therefore so early as the year
 451, the General Council of Chalcedon decreed
 that the marriage of monks should be punished
 with excommunication.

As to the employments of the early monks and
 the occupation of their time ; all were obliged to
 exercise themselves in bodily labour, partly to
 maintain themselves, and partly to avoid idleness
 and its accompanying temptations. "Some of
 them," says Fuller,† "were gardeners like Adam,
 husbandmen like Noah, caught fish with Peter,
 made tents with Paul,—as every man was either
 advised by his inclination, or directed by his dex-
 terity ; and no calling was counted base that was
 found beneficial. Much were they delighted with
 making of hives, as the emblem of a convent for
 order and industry ; wherein the bees under a
 master their abbot have several cells, and live and
 labour in a regular discipline." Besides the em-
 ployments above alluded to, there were other
 occupations connected with the monastery itself
 which required their attention, such as the care
 and preparation of provisions for their common

Of the em-
 ployments
 of the early
 monks.

* See Carew's Ch. Hist. of Ireland, p. 175. † Ut sup. vid. p. 226.

A. D. 325.

Their devo-
tions.Their eve-
ning prayer
accompa-
nied by a
lecture.

table, attending on each other at meals, the reception of strangers, looking after their cattle, &c., which were allotted to individual monks, and some of these offices, as that of cook, to every one in turn, week about. Much of their time was also spent in devotion, and all met for prayer and praise at certain stated hours of the day; very generally seven times, at what were called the seven canonical hours; but in some cases less frequently, in the day.* Those of Egypt met thus twice in the day for morning and evening prayer; but then in the interval between also, they did not altogether forget their devotion, for when at their work in the cell or in the field, the Psalms and other portions of Holy Scripture were still present in their thoughts and on their lips, and afforded them subjects for meditation and prayer. St. Jerome further tells us† that it was usual at their evening prayer, (which was at three o'clock) as soon as the Psalms had been sung, and the Scriptures read, and prayers ended, for the abbot to address to them a sermon or lecture on the glories of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the future hopes of His people: and this discourse was framed in such a touching and affecting strain, that it would often move those present even to tears.

* Bingham, book vii. ch. iii. sec. 17.

† Ep. 22, ad Eustoch, c. 15. (*Bingham*,) tom. i. col. 119, cap. 35. Opp. Ed. Bened. Venet. 1766.

Jerome also mentions* that it was their custom every day, as soon as work was over, to "learn something out of the Scriptures," and to devote themselves on the Lord's day more exclusively to exercises of this kind. To their prayers they also joined extraordinary fasting, those in Egypt usually abstaining from all food until three o'clock in the afternoon, on every day of the week except Saturday and Sunday, and others elsewhere observing a like practice on every Wednesday and Friday. But generally speaking, some were more, some less, strict in observances of this sort, some prolonging their fast much beyond what others were equal to, and the measure being altogether voluntary and left to every man's own judgment and conscience, as is expressly mentioned by St. Augustine.†

A. D. 325.

Their daily study of the Scriptures.

Their fasting.

Lastly, as to their tonsure and habit, it appears that their admission to the monastic state was usually accompanied with some change of dress, not to signify any religious mystery, but merely such as to betoken gravity.‡ Long hair was thought unbecoming in men, and contrary to the Apostles' rule, and they were therefore ordered to have theirs cut short on admission: but they did not shave their heads, because this practice, which was used by the heathen priests of the

Their tonsure and habits.

* *ib.* † *De Morib. Eccles. Cathol.*, c. 33. *Opp. tom. i. col. 899.*
Bingham, book vii. ch. iii. sec. 16. ‡ *ib.* sec. 6.

A. D. 325.

Early appearance of superstitious abuses.

Of the ancient monks of Ireland. A.D. 664.

goddess Isis in Egypt, was judged unsuitable and degrading for Christians: so that in fact the tonsure of these monks was only an obligation to wear short hair. And as for the rest of their attire, they for the most part, excepting some in Egypt, wore no peculiar habit, but one which was common to other Christians also that were no monks, only that it differed in being of a coarser and meaner description, expressive of humility and contempt of the world. Abuses had indeed already begun to appear in St. Jerome's time, for he severely censures some that used to walk in chains, black cloaks, bare feet, &c., which he says were "tokens of a devil:"* and there were others, who affecting to follow to the letter the words of the Blessed Lord, in St. Matt. x. 38, adopted the superstitious practice of wearing wooden crosses about their necks; a custom which was strongly condemned by the more sensible among them as being adapted to promote "not edification, but laughter, in the beholders."† Jerome's own advice to them was that they should observe a decent mean between elegance and slovenliness,‡ avoiding any remarkable peculiarities that might attract the attention or curious gaze of the idle crowd.

Thus far have we been occupied with the original primitive monks of the fourth century :

* Ep. 22. ad Eustoch., c. 12. (*ad.* 28, 29.)† Cassian. Collat. viii. c. 3. p. 336. Ed. Bened. Lips. 1733. ‡ *ut sup.*

and now turning our thoughts to those that lived in Britain and Ireland in the seventh century, we find that these latter adopted very much the same general system and mode of life as that of the earlier monks above described: and in particular, they carefully retained and carried into practice, some of the best points of the original monastic institute; such as, a careful and reverent attention to the study of the Holy Scriptures, habits of constant industry, the practice of earning their bread by manual labour, &c. But it must be confessed at the same time, that whatever advantages of this sort they could lay claim to, the seeds of serious mischief had already begun to grow and take root in the system. For even now admission appears to have been accompanied with a solemn and religious promise of perpetual monasticism and virginity,* and there was thus given a mischievous and indiscreet encouragement to vows of celibacy, the observation of which it would seem was afterwards too often found a thing impracticable; at least if we may judge by the enactments which it was deemed fit to make in order to enforce the keeping of such vows. For in some of the ancient monastic rules framed by Irishmen, and apparently sanctioned by the Church at the time when they were drawn

A. D. 664.

Their good qualities corrupted by the seeds of evil.

* Adamn. Vit. St. Columbæ. lib. i. cap. 32, Colg. (c. 18. Canis.) See Lanigan's Church History of Ireland, vol. iv. pp. 365-367.

A. D. 664.

up, there are laws, which, applying a cure worse than the disease, brand as adultery the marriage of those who had embraced the monastic profession, and enact the severest penalties, even to excommunication, against such persons as acted in this way, and persisted in so doing.

The ancient Irish monastic rules did not confine the clergy to a cloister.

The old Irish rules were not as strictly monastical as those of the Egyptian or Benedictine monks, inasmuch as they allowed, without any particular dispensation, the union of the active service of the Church, such as was practised by ordinary clergymen, with the observance of monastic life.* This and other features of the system, as received by the Irish, will be best explained to the reader, by reference to a few particular instances illustrative of its practical working. Those which we shall adduce are connected with monasteries established by the Irish in England, as it is of such that we have the best and most authentic accounts; but what is recorded of them is of course alike applicable, at least in great measure, to those of the same age in Ireland, as they no doubt agreed in most respects.

St. Aidan's case, an illustration of the system.
A.D. 635.

St. Aidan, having become bishop of Lindisfarne, continued to follow there the same kind of monastic life as he had previously led at Iona, so far as it was compatible with the active duties

* Lanigan's Ec. Hist. iv. 348.

of his office in Northumberland. But he was not confined to the retirement of a cloister, but "used to travel about," as Bede tells us,* "visiting every place, city and country alike; not riding on horseback, but going on foot, unless perchance any urgent necessity compelled him. And whenever he lighted on any persons as he went along, rich or poor, he would immediately turn to accost them, and invite them if they were unbelievers, to the initiatory sacrament of the faith, or else, if they were believers, he would confirm them in the same faith, and urge them by his words and deeds to almsgiving and the performance of good works." All presents that were made him by the rich, he would turn to account for the use of the poor, or the redemption of persons unjustly sold for slaves. His table was sometimes honored by the presence of the great ones of the world; but he cared little to fawn upon them, or court their smiles, or flatter them when in the wrong. And again he would occasionally appear as a guest at the king's table, accompanied by a clergyman or two; but he would at such times retire early for reading and prayer with his brethren. He also spent a part of his time in instructing candidates for holy orders. Bede further mentions that he followed the practice of fasting until three o'clock

A. D. 664.

His diligence in the work of the ministry.

And general activity in good works.

* Ec. Hist., lib. iii. cap. 5.

A. D. 664.

Bede's account of St. Colman's manner of life.

in the afternoon on every Wednesday and Friday, except during the fifty days next after Easter.

In the place where he mentions Bishop Colman's departure from England,* Bede gives us some additional information concerning the habits and manners of the Irish monks at Lindisfarne, and his words are so much to the point before us in that place, that the reader will scarcely object to a long extract on the subject. "How strict was his frugality and continence," says Bede, (i.e. Colman's,) "and that of his predecessors, was attested even by the place that he ruled over, where there were found after their departure, very few houses besides the church; that is to say, only such as were absolutely necessary for the maintenance of civilized life. They had no wealth beyond their cattle; for they had no need of collecting money, or providing houses for the entertainment of the great folk of the world, since they never came to the church except only for the purpose of prayer or for hearing the Word of God. The king himself when he had occasion, used to come attended by only five or six persons, and go away again as soon as he had ended his devotions in the church. And if it ever so happened, that they took any refreshment there, they used to content themselves with the mere simple and every-day food

* Ec. Hist., lib. III. cap. 26.

of the brethren, and sought for nothing beyond it. For the whole anxiety of those teachers was occupied with serving God, not the world ; their whole care was given to the improvement of the heart, not the stomach. And for this reason the habit of religion was held in great veneration at that time, so that wherever any clergyman or monk would come, he was received with delight by all, as the minister of God. And if he were met setting out on a journey, the people would run up and be delighted to receive, with lowly obeisance, the impress of his hand, or a blessing from his mouth. They also listened with attention to the exhortations of these teachers ; and used moreover on the Lord's days, to flock eagerly to the church or to the monasteries, not for the refreshment of their bodies, but for hearing the Word of God. And if any of the priests happened to come into a village, the villagers would presently assemble together, and be sure to request of him to administer to them the Word of Life. For the priests themselves had never any other motive in visiting the villages, except for preaching, baptising, visiting the sick, and in brief, to attend to the care of souls : being, as they were, men so far remote from any infection of avarice, that they used not even to accept farms or property for establishing monasteries, unless constrained by temporal rulers.

A. D. 664.

Single-mindedness of these Irish teachers ;

and their popularity in consequence.

Eagerness of the English to hear the Word of God from them.

A. D. 664.

Their successors men of inferior merit.

Bede's account of St. Cuthbert's monastic and ministerial life;

And this system in all its features was retained in the churches of the Northumbrians for some time after this period."

Thus far Bede, from whose words in the last sentence here quoted, it appears that a change had already taken place before his own time, and that some at least of the excellencies which called forth his praise were even then no longer observable in the successors of St. Colman and his Irish fellow-labourers.

We shall mention here but one other instance (from Bede's History)* illustrative of the old Irish monastic system; namely, that of the famous St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne. He was appointed prior of Melrose Abbey, (an Irish establishment on the banks of the Tweed,) about A.D. 661; and in this new capacity "did not only set before the monastery itself the precepts and example of a strict life, but did also concern himself to reclaim the peasantry about there, far and wide, from the course of their vain conversation to the pursuit of heavenly blessedness;" for which purpose "he would frequently leave the monastery, sometimes riding, but more commonly going on foot, and come to the villages that lay around, and preach the way of truth to the erring inhabitants: which method Boisil too had been accustomed to follow, when he was prior. For it was usual at that time with

* lib. iv. cap. 27.

the English, when a clergyman or presbyter came into a village, to assemble all at his bidding to hear the Word, and attend gladly to what was spoken to them And he [i.e. Cuthbert] was accustomed to visit those places in particular, and preach in those villages especially, which lay so far away in the high and rugged mountains, as to make others afraid to think of visiting them, and hinder any teachers from coming there in consequence of the poverty and wildness for which they were remarkable. And he nevertheless, making himself a willing slave in the pious toil, used to attend to these districts with such an industrious method of careful instruction, that after leaving the monastery, he would often not return for a whole week, sometimes two or three, occasionally for even a full month ; and there he would stay in the mountain parts, and invite the country people, at once by the word of his preaching, and by his virtuous life, to think on heavenly things." The objects of his care, we are told, were professing Christians, but many of them very ignorant, superstitious, and ungodly.

A. D. 664.

and of his missionary visits to the mountain hamlets near Melrose.

St. Cuthbert is thought by several distinguished writers, to have been an Irishman. The learned Sir J. Ware states, that he was born either at Kells, or as some have said, at Killmorduck, now Kilmacud, in the parish of Stillor-

St. Cuthbert supposed to have been an Irishman.

A. D. 664.

gan near Dublin, the church of which is named after him. It is not certain however whether he may not have been a native of Great Britain; but at all events he was educated in the Irish system at Melrose, and he seems to have been a follower of the Irish in all respects unless with regard to Easter; in which, at least after the Synod of Whitby, he conformed to the Roman rites.* According to Bede's description, he was an eminent example of holiness and piety, whose bright beaming angelic countenance but indicated the dispositions of his heart; and he was possessed of most touching and persuasive eloquence, that came home to the consciences of all who heard him.

Lanigan's account of the habit of the old Irish monks,

Dr. Lanigan says, that the ancient Irish monks and clergy were distinguished from the laity by their tonsure, but that "they had no particular habit or form of dress, except such as became grave, sedate, and humble persons. They wore," he says, "a long tunic made of wool, over which they sometimes threw the *cuculla* or mantle of the same material." And he adds, that "there was no difference as to the colour of their garments; for they left the wool in the natural colour which it had received from the sheep. Accordingly some were clad in white, some in black; for besides white sheep, there were also

* See pag. 150, sup. Ware, *de Scriptor. Hib.* lib. i. Dubl. 1639.

black ones in Ireland ; but there was no obligation as to using any particular colour.”* This account of the old monks’ habit given by Dr. Lanigan appears to be partly incorrect, at least so far as it implies that their attire was altogether the same with that of some who were not monks : for Bede frequently mentions “ the monks’ habit ” as a peculiar one, in connection with the names of St. Columba, St. Cuthbert, and others.† The use of undyed wool appears to have been a common thing among the old Irish generally, and it was observed as a rule by the brethren belonging to St. Cuthbert’s monastery at Lindisfarne in particular.‡

A. D. 661.
not perfectly correct.

And now taking a general view of the ancient monastic system, independently of the serious evils naturally connected with it and cherished by its influence, we may easily see that the early monasteries were made to serve many legitimate and good purposes. For in the first place, they furnished the country with useful schools for general education, and also for the training of persons to serve in the ministry of the Church : “ Our monasteries in ancient time,” says Archbishop Ussher,§ “ were the seminaries of the ministry, being as it were so many colleges of

Uses of the old monastic foundations ;

as schools and colleges ;

* Lanigan’s Ec. Hist. iv. 357. † Ec. Hist. iii. 4, 26 ; et iv. 27.

‡ Bed. Vit. S. Cuthb. cap. 16. Jocelin. Vit. S. Patr. cap. 185.

§ Religion of A. I. chap. vi.

A. D. 664.

as book de-
positaries,
and substi-
tutes for
printing-
offices ;

learned divines, whereunto the people did usually resort for instruction, and from whence the Church was wont continually to be supplied with able ministers ;” and in like manner Bingham observes,* that “ monasteries were anciently schools of learning, and places of pious and religious education for youth.” The monastic establishments further supplied, to some extent, the place of printing-offices and book-depositaries, by their providing numerous copies of manuscript books, the sacred Scriptures, &c., at a time when there was hardly any other machinery in existence for the circulation of such works ; and so it comes to pass that to the labours of the industrious persons belonging to those institutions we are indebted for all, or nearly all, that remains to our time of ancient history, poetry, science, theology, or general literature : but above all, we owe much to the care and pains with which they preserved and multiplied copies of the Word of God, until the art of printing altogether superseded the necessity of their toils in this respect. †

as mission-
ary sta-
tions ;

Again, the ancient monasteries in their first institution, served for missionary stations, from which, planted as they commonly were, in wild and uncivilised places, men might go forth to the poor and ignorant around, to preach to them

* Eccl. Antiq., book vii. chap. iii. sec. 22.

† See p. 100, sup.

of "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,"* and thus they furnished centres from which might be disseminated the knowledge of "the Word of Life,"† among those whose moral degradation was but a natural consequence of the wildness of their dwellings and the turbulence of the times in which they lived. The security and protection afforded by mutual society was found to be of no small advantage by the members of the missionary community that had chosen such a sphere of labour. And the example of so many persons as were sometimes found in these communities, living together in habits of regular and systematic industry, and the consequent improvement of the land which was under their care, must have exercised an important influence on the temporal advantages and comforts of the population at large.

A. D. 664.

Once more, the early monasteries, besides comprehending in themselves the see-house and cathedral, (and in fact the nucleus of the future diocese, at least in many cases,)‡ supplied also the place of parish churches at a time when those in the land were few. The church seems to have been the most striking feature of the establishment at Lindisfarne in St. Colman's time, and there the king and people alike would come on the Lord's days "to pray and hear the

as cathedrals
and parish
churches;

* p. 242. † p. 241. ‡ And probably, in most cases. See p. 241, sup.

A. D. 664.

Word of God,"* their ministers being men of the highest repute and popularity as preachers ; as is evident enough from the passage of Bede already adduced in this chapter.

and as alms-
houses for
the poor.

The last use of the old monasteries which we shall here advert to, was, their answering the purposes of alms-houses and other like charitable institutions, many poor and indigent persons, orphans and strangers, receiving from them constant or occasional relief.†

Conclusion
of the sub-
ject.

In fine, although believing the monastic system to have been but too naturally calculated to rear up nurseries of " Scribes and Pharisees," self-righteous, hypocritical, and superstitious, in the Christian Church ; we are yet free to admit that among those who bore the name of monks, there were many " Scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, men like unto householders, bringing out of their treasures things new and old ;"‡ the old and valued remains of former ages, beginning with Moses and the Prophets ; and also new and original works of merit, intended to promote the growth of piety and Christian knowledge.§

* p. 240.

† pp. 125, 226.

‡ St. Matt. xiii. 52.

§ There is a curious analogy between the description of the primitive monks and their origin, as given (from Bingham) at p. 228, and the accounts of the Scottish Covenanters, written by some of their ardent admirers. See Appx. No. iv.

CHAP. VIII.

THE HISTORY OF ST. COLUMBANUS.

THE history of St. Columbanus belongs properly to an earlier period than that which last occupied our attention, as he was partly a contemporary of his famous namesake,* St. Columba. But in consequence of its connection with the Paschal controversy, with the ancient Irish monastic system, and other points of importance already brought before the reader, we have thought it well in the present instance to dispense a little with chronological order, and reserve our account of St. Columbanus for this place, believing that it will be read with more interest, and be better understood, after the previous elucidation of the points alluded to, and that it will also from this position be likely to reflect the greatest quantity of additional light on the same subjects.

In the first place, it will be well to premise, that our knowledge of this saint's history and character is derived, partly from several writings of his own which have been preserved to our time, and of which we shall speak more at large hereafter ; partly from the account of his Life,

A. D. 539.

The Life of
St. Colum-
banus why
given in this
place.

Our know-
ledge of his
history,
whence de-
rived.

* The names Columba and Columbanus differ only in form, both answering to the Hebrew name Jonah, (or Jonas) a dove. By old writers they are sometimes interchanged, Columba being called Columbanus, and vice versa. See Jonas, cap. 1, and Lanigan.

A. D. 539.

written by Jonas,* an author who flourished a few years after the Saint's death; and partly from different notices concerning him, which occur in the Lives of contemporary saints,† and other ecclesiastical records belonging to the same period. Jonas who is here mentioned was abbot of the monastery of Bobio, founded by St. Columbanus, and his Life of the Saint is a very interesting work. It resembles in some particulars the Life of Columbkille by Adamnanus, but as a historical treatise is far superior to it, inasmuch as Jonas gives a very clear, satisfactory, and well arranged account of the principal occurrences in the Life of St. Columbanus; and although his work includes many of the miraculous narratives which abound in the histories of the saints of those ages, yet the miracles which it records, while they are much less numerous than those described by Adamnanus, are at the same time, generally speaking, such as display much more judgment and discretion. Jonas appears to have been an Italian.‡ It is worth noticing that he, like Adamnanus, makes no mention of purgatory, prayers for the dead, prayers to saints, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, papal supremacy, &c. &c.

* It is included in Fleming's *Collectanea Sacra*; also in the Cologne edition of Bede's works, (tom. iii. col. 199,) 1612. Messingham too has edited it; and Mabillon, *sac. Bened.* ii.

† Those for instance of Eustasius, Attala, and Bertolf, in the above edition of Bede; and that of St. Gallus, by Walafridus Strabus.

‡ Vid. Lanigan, *Ec. Hist.* ii. 263.

And now with regard to St. Columbanus himself; he was born of a respectable family in Leinster;* but the precise year of his birth is unknown, some assigning it to 559, and others to 539. The latter seems to be much the most probable date. From the early days of childhood he began to receive the benefits of a liberal education, and applying to his studies with much diligence, became a considerable proficient "in grammar, rhetoric, geometry, and the range of the divine Scriptures."† He soon began to show the strong influence of the latter upon his heart, and the ardent piety of his disposition, by the earnestness with which he set himself to resist sin and flee from temptation. For finding that he was beset, when at home, by companions whose society was ill calculated to assist his religious improvement, he determined on removing to some other place, where he might enjoy higher advantages in this respect. Accordingly, notwithstanding the strong opposition of his mother to the plan, he left Leinster, and came and placed himself under the care of "a venerable person named Senile, who had a high reputation among his countrymen at that time, for his singular piety, and accomplishment in the study of the Sacred Scriptures. And when this holy man saw that his pupil was possessed of quick abilities, he instructed him carefully in the whole of the divine Scriptures."‡ And

A. D. 539.

Concerning
his birth,
youth, and
education.

* Jonas, Vit. S. Col. cap. 2. † ib. ‡ ib.

A. D. 539.

Columbanus made such good progress under the instructions which he thus received, that "while yet a very young man, he wrote an exposition of the book of Psalms in elegant language, so thoroughly were the treasures of the divine Scriptures kept stored in his bosom; and he also composed many other pieces which are either suitable for singing, or profitable for communicating instruction."* Senile, with whom he studied, appears to have been abbot of Cluaininis in Lough Erne.

He embraces the monastic life, and resolves on becoming a missionary.

Having continued with Senile for some time, Columbanus resolved on adopting the monastic life, and for this purpose betook himself to St. Comgall's famous monastery of Bangor: and here he remained for many years, during which he spent much of his time in prayer and fasting.† At length, inspired with a missionary zeal for the spread of religion in other lands, he applied to his abbot Comgall for his sanction to such an undertaking; but Comgall, unwilling "to suffer the loss of one that was such a comfort to him,"

* ib. Mr. Carew (of Maynooth, in his *Eccl. Hist. of Ireland*, Coyne, Dublin, 1835, p. 223.) gives the following paraphrase of the above passage from Jonas:—"Fortunately for Columbanus, his master was ardently devoted to the study of the Sacred Scriptures. The bent of his pupil's inclinations was soon directed by the example of his tutor to the study of the inspired writings. The proficiency of the pupil fully answered his master's care. *While he was yet a boy*, he composed, besides other tracts, an exposition of the Psalms." But the words of Jonas, (*intra adolescentiæ ætatem detentus*) do not properly express a mere boy. Nor would a boy's comment (unless by miracle) have deserved such a notice.

† Jonas, cap. 3.

refused at first to countenance the project : afterwards, however, he was induced to give his consent, "not considering it right to study his own convenience more than the welfare of others."* Columbanus therefore, with twelve associates of approved piety, prepared for his expedition. Before setting out, the brethren were summoned together to ask the divine blessing on the work in which they were about to engage ; after which, sailing away from their native land, they came first to Britain : where they waited a little, in order to refresh themselves and complete their plans. "They resolve at length to visit the territories of Gaul, [i.e. France,] and to observe carefully the dispositions of the people there ; and if the blessings of salvation could be disseminated among them, to continue in the country for any length of time ; but if they should find the hearts of the inhabitants hardened through the blindness of arrogance, to bend their course to the nations of the neighbouring states."†

"Setting out therefore from the British territories, they came to Gaul, where at that time," as Jonas informs us, "either from the frequent invasions of foreign foes, or through the negligence of the prelates, the power of religion was regarded as almost extinct, nothing but the pro-

A. D. 590

He comes to Gaul. State of that country in his time.

* *ib.*

† *ib.*

A. D. 590.

Columbanus, on his way through France, preaches the Gospel.

He settles in Burgundy, and founds monastic institutions there.

fession of Christianity remaining.”* Indeed, to use the words of a modern historian, so far as the political history of France at this period is concerned, the facts connected with it “are of little other importance than as they impress on the mind a thorough notion of the extreme wickedness of almost every person concerned in them, and consequently of the state to which society was reduced;”† although flourishing churches had been established in the country long before, some of whose bishops we have already had occasion to notice in this history.‡

Columbanus and his companions having arrived on the continent, proceeded towards the kingdom of Burgundy: and as they went along, “the venerable man took care to preach the Word of the Gospel in whatever places they came to.”§ Jonas speaks in very high terms of the example of holy living and brotherly love by which he and his partners in the work enforced their preaching. “Such abounding grace,” he adds, “was there in this blessed man, that whatever persons’ houses he was staying in for any time, he was sure to turn the attention of all the inmates to their improvement in religion.”||

The year in which St. Columbanus arrived in Burgundy was either A.D. 589 or 590. The part

* ib. c. 4.

† State of Europe during the Middle Ages, by Hallam, ch. i. part 1.

‡ Vid. pp. 28, 115, 121, sup.

§ Jonas, cap. 4.

|| ib.

of the kingdom in which he settled was situated in the vast desert of Vosges, a wild and mountainous district, which, according to modern divisions, is included in the province of Franche Comtè, and department of Upper Saone. Here the missionary party took up their abode in an old and ruinous fort, called Anagrates, (now Anegray,) where they at first suffered much from scarcity and badness of provisions. But "this follower of God," says Jonas, "bore in mind, that man doth not live by bread alone, but that they who satiate themselves with the Word of Life, enjoy an abundant and continual feast, the which if any man partaketh of, he shall never know hunger,"* and so Columbanus and his followers bore their hardships with patience, until the aid of the neighbours and their own agricultural industry had enabled them to procure regular maintenance for themselves. Nor was it long before the community under Columbanus's care had increased to such an extent, by the accession of persons from the country round, who came to place themselves under his direction, that he found it necessary to provide a fit residence for them to live in; for which purpose he fixed on a place called *Luxovium*, (now *Luxeuil*, or more properly *Luxeu*.) Here in a very wild part of the forest, and about eight miles from Anegray,

A. D. 590.

Foundation
of the mo-
nastery of
Luxeu ;

* Ib. cap. 5.

A. D. 590.

and that of
Fontaines.

Columba-
nus's share
in the Pas-
chal Contro-
versy,
A.D. 601.

he constructed his famous monastery of Luxeu, in A.D. 590, or perhaps early in 591.* But so great was the number of those who flocked together attracted by his fame, and anxious to profit by his instructions, that the place so provided was soon found insufficient to accommodate the growing multitude of his followers, among whom were many of the children of the nobility:† and he therefore erected very soon after, another monastery, at a place in the neighbourhood which he called *Ad fontanas*, (i.e. Fountains', now Fontaines,) from the abundance of springs that were in its neighbourhood. Over his different establishments were placed superiors in whose religious character he reposed confidence, and they were all governed by a rule of his own framing, borrowed perhaps in part from the institution at Bangor, with which he had been formerly connected. He also spent part of his time successively at each of the communities under his care, superintending and regulating their affairs.‡

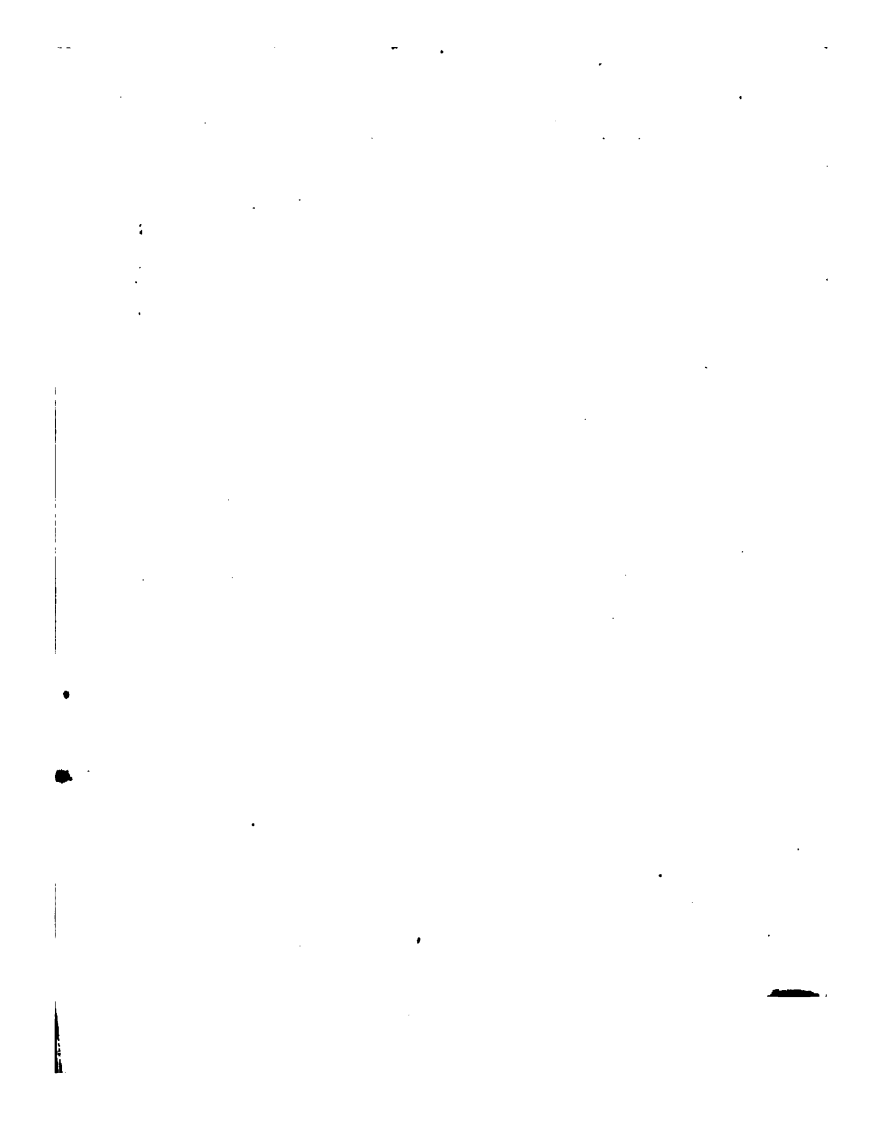
St. Columbanus, after having settled in France, continued still to observe the Irish mode of celebrating Easter, a practice which brought on him the censure and persecution of the French bishops around him.§ To defend himself, he

* Jonas, cap. 9. Lanigan ii. 267.

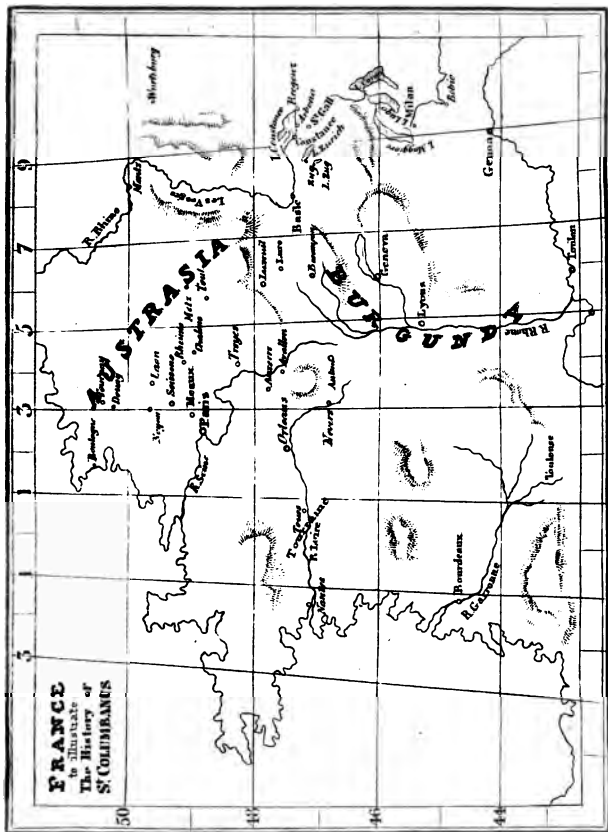
† Jonas, ib.

‡ ib.

§ See his letters on the subject in Fleming's "*Collectanea Sacra, seu S. Columbanii, Hiberni Abbatis, &c., acta et opuscula.* Lovan, 1667."



FRANCE
to illustrate
The History of
St. COLUMBANUS



addressed a letter to Gregory the Great, who was then bishop of Rome, arguing strongly in support of the Irish customs, and requesting Gregory to express his decision on the question, "telling him however," at the same time, "that the western Churches, meaning those of Britain and Ireland, will not agree to any thing contrary to the authority of St. Jerome, whom he considered as having approved of the calculation on which it was founded."* But although Columbanus wrote more than once to Gregory, his letters to that prelate, by some mischance, never arrived at their destination. Meanwhile, several of the prelates of Gaul assembled together in a council, to consider the question and settle on the course which they should pursue with regard to the Saint; whereupon he wrote to them a mild but firm letter, remonstrating with them upon the impropriety of troubling him about such a point, or of expelling him from his abode on account of it. This letter (which was written in A.D. 601 or 602,) is still preserved:† it is penned in a very Christian spirit, and indicates that the writer was one of a warm heart and good feeling: but as we shall have occasion to refer to it again, it need not be spoken of more largely in this place. Whatever was the result of it, we

A. D. 601.

* Lanigan, ii. 270.

† Vid. Flem. Collect. Sac.

A. D. 601.

and Columbanus still following his own practice with regard to Easter, and still annoyed by the Gallican clergy for so doing. Again he wrote to another pope, for the purpose of being protected against their attacks, and supported in following his own Easter as delivered by his elders, unless it were contrary to faith. "We ask," he adds, "to be allowed to live in ecclesiastical peace and unity, such as St. Polycarp maintained with Pope Anicetus, each of them observing that system which he had received, and abiding in the same mode of life wherein he was called."

More serious troubles threaten Columbanus.
A.D. 609.

We do not read that the controversy about Easter came to any thing of a more serious issue in Columbanus's case. But there were much worse troubles in store for the Saint, which were ultimately to lead to his expulsion from Luxeu, and banishment from the entire kingdom in which he had settled. To enable us to understand rightly the circumstances alluded to, it will be needful to glance briefly at the political state of France in the time of St. Columbanus.

State of France at this period.

The victories of Clovis, in the end of the fifth century and beginning of the sixth, over the various tribes inhabiting the country now called France, formed the principal foundation of the French monarchy. On the death of Clovis in A.D. 511, his dominions were divided equally between his four sons, whose capitals were at

Paris, Orleans, Metz, and Soissons, respectively, but the boundaries of their different kingdoms cannot be very accurately determined at this day. The eastern or German division, of which Metz was the capital, was known by the name of Austrasia,* and it appears to have been the largest and most important of the four. In A.D. 534, the important kingdom of Burgundy,† was added to the French dominions; the whole of which were again united under Clotaire I., son of Clovis, the sole successor to the rights of all his brothers. This Clotaire, having reigned fifty years, died in 561, when the kingdoms which he had ruled over were again divided, each of his four sons succeeding to a part of them: Charibert became king of Paris, Chilperic of Soissons, Sigebert of Austrasia, and Gontram of Burgundy, which was now joined with Orleans. Sigebert was killed in 575, and succeeded by his son Hildebert, during whose reign Columbanus came to settle in Gontram's kingdom.‡

On the death of Gontram in A.D. 593, his

* Austrasia comprehended the part of France between the Rhine, the Meuse, the Scheld, and the Voeges. Vid. *Moreri, Dictionnaire Historique*, art. *Austrasie*.

† The kingdom of Burgundy then included the two provinces of the same name, almost the whole of Switzerland, Dauphiny, with a part of Provence and Savoy.

‡ Vid. Jonas. Lanigan's Ec. His. Hoffman's Lexicon, articles *Austrasia*, *Burgundia*, &c.; Moreri's Dictionary, articles *Clovis*, *Clotaire*, *Childebert*, &c.; Russell's Modern Europe; Miller's History philosophically illustrated, &c.

A. D. 609.

nephew Hildebert, succeeding to his royal rights, became thus king of Austrasia and Burgundy. But Hildebert himself dying in A.D. 596, these two kingdoms were again separated, and divided between his two sons, Theodebert and Theoderic, (or *Thierri*, as he is sometimes called by modern writers). These princes being but young when their father died, were at first under the care and influence of their grandmother Brunechild, (or *Brunhaut*,) Hildebert's mother, and relict of Sigebert above mentioned. Theodebert was king of Austrasia, and his brother Theoderic king of Burgundy. The latter congratulated himself not a little on having St. Columbanus resident in his portion of the country, for the fame of this eminent individual was now become very great, and he was highly spoken of and honoured throughout all France and Germany.*

Theoderic's
immoral life
reproved by
St. Colum-
banus.
A. D. 609.

But Theoderic was leading a vicious and immoral life in the company of concubines, with whom he had chosen to associate instead of uniting himself with a lawful queen, whose children might prove honorable successors to his throne. It could not be expected that one so bold and faithful in reproving sin as Columbanus was, should allow this guilty course to pass without censure, and he therefore took occasion to reprove with freedom the king's irreligious con-

* Jonas, cap. 17.

duct. Theoderic bore these rebukes well at first, and made fair promises of amendment, engaging to separate himself from all ungodly connections: for although living as he did, he had notwithstanding a very great veneration for St. Columbanus, and used often to visit him and ask the benefit and kindly aid of his prayers.*

A. D. 609.

Now Queen Brunchild was a very wicked and ungodly as well as a very clever old woman, and like another Jezebel or Herodias, she encouraged the king in what was bad, and stirred him up to it. And therefore, when she saw that there was some prospect of his amending his evil course of life, she became apprehensive lest he might introduce into the palace a lawful queen, and there might thus come an end of her own rank and influence. And seeing that Columbanus was resolute in setting his face against the wickedness which she cherished, she became violently enraged against him, and began to persecute him by every means in her power. She sent orders commanding his monks not to quit the precincts of their monasteries, and forbidding others to receive or assist them in any way. She also prevailed upon the king (his own sinful affections co-operating with her efforts) to continue in his evil ways, and further, was successful enough to procure a breach between him and Columbanus.†

The Saint is persecuted in consequence.

* *ib.*† *ib.* cap. 18.

A. D. 609.

The king comes to Luxeu, and gives orders for the expulsion of Columbanus.

For after different negociations between them, and a repetition of promises on the king's part, without any appearance of a practical fulfilment of them, the Saint, perceiving that the scandal was as rife as ever, at length wrote to Theoderic a severe letter of reproof, threatening to excommunicate him if he would not immediately alter his mode of life according to his promises. Upon this, Brunechild used all her influence to exasperate the king against St. Columbanus, and wrought upon the courtiers likewise, to induce them to aid in her malicious purposes. She solicited the bishops also to pass a censure upon his monastic rule. Pressed by her entreaties, the king accompanied by his sycophants, visited Luxeu in person : and not having any worse charge to bring against Columbanus, complained of his differing from the usage of the province, in not allowing people generally to have access to the interior of his monasteries. Hereupon a warm altercation took place between the two parties, in the course of which the Saint remarked in very strong terms upon the king's unprincipled and persecuting conduct, and assured him that such behaviour on his part would certainly draw down the divine judgments on his family. At the close of their interview Theoderic gave him to understand, that since his customs differed from those of all other people, he must quit the

place, and return by the way that he came. The king then went away, leaving a nobleman by name Baudolphus in charge of the Saint, and this officer presently brought him to Besançon, where he was to remain until the king's sentence should further determine his fate.*

A. D. 609.

Having been left to himself at Besançon quite free, and not guarded nor molested by any one, Columbanus thought he might be allowed to return to his monastery; which he accordingly did openly, accompanied by those of his followers that were with him. But Brunechild and Theoderic, hearing of this, became more enraged than ever, and sent a company of military to force him from Luxeu to his exile once more. The Saint was very unwilling to part from a place and people that he loved so much, but Theoderic's orders were peremptory, and he therefore, after some little hesitation, accompanied his captors, whose respect for Columbanus made their office on this occasion an unpleasant one to them, however unavoidable. His brethren were willing to go with him all over the world, but the guard, according to the instructions they had received, would allow none to accompany him, except such as were from Ireland or Britain, those that were born in France being forced by the king's order to remain behind. This final departure of

Columbanus returns to Luxeu; but is again expelled, and forced to leave the kingdom.

* Jonas, cap. 18.

A. D. 610.

He and his
Irish follow-
ers are sent
with a guard
of military
to Nantes.

Columbanus from his monasteries in the Vosges, took place in A.D. 610, twenty years after his first coming to settle in that country.*

The guard appointed to take charge of our Saint, had orders not to leave him until they had brought him on his way back towards Ireland as far as to the borders of the kingdom ; or in other words, to the town of Nantes, where it was intended that he should embark for his own country. Jonas gives a very detailed and interesting account of their journey through France, which however, can of course be only very briefly sketched here. Passing through Besançon, Autun, Avallon, and Auxerre, "with guards before and behind them," the Saint and his companions were brought to Nevers, to embark in a boat plying on the river Loire, which was to bring them "to the British sea." By this conveyance they were brought next to Orleans, where not being allowed so much as to enter the churches, Columbanus and his followers rested for a little while in tents on the river's bank. And when some of their number went into the city for provisions, they found that the people through fear of the king, were unwilling to supply them with any thing, except what could be furnished to them stealthily.†

Their visit
to Tours on
the way.

Advancing up the Loire, they arrived next at

* Jonas, cap. 19. Lanigan, ii. 278, &c. † Jonas, cap. 20.

Tours: and here Columbanus requested permission to visit the tomb of the famous St. Martin, who had been bishop of that city. The guards however would not allow this, but told the rowers to work with all their might, and the helmsman to keep the boat right in the centre of the river. They were notwithstanding obliged after all to visit the city and make some delay there, and so Columbanus obtained his wish in the end, and also, as Jonas mentions, continued all that night in prayer near St. Martin's grave. Next morning Leuparius the bishop invited him to dinner, and having been permitted to go, he spent that day with him; and then returning to his company, proceeded with them on their journey to Nantes. At the latter place they remained for some days waiting for a passage to Ireland; and it was during this delay that Columbanus wrote back to his monks at Luxeu, a very interesting letter of advice and comfort; of which, as it is still preserved, we shall have occasion to say more in the next chapter.*

An Irish merchant vessel having been at length found ready to sail homewards, the prisoners were put on board. But they had only gotten a little way into the deep water when a violent swell of the sea drove the ship to land again, and cast it on the shore, where it lay

A. D. 610.

They embark for Ireland, but are driven back to land; whereupon they turn to Soissons.

* *ib. cap. 21.*

A. D. 611.

Columbanus
removes to
Austrasia
and settles
at Regenz,
where he
preaches to
the heathen
Suevi.

stranded for three days : and the shipmaster conceiving that this mishap had occurred to him in consequence of having the Saint and his companions on board, put them and their goods out, and would have no more to say to them, whereupon they returned again to Nantes.* And being now perfectly free, Columbanus leaving Nantes, retired to the realm of Clotaire II. king of Soissons, (son of Chilperic already mentioned,) who received him with much kindness, knowing all his circumstances. Clotaire also begged of the Saint to settle in his dominions, offering him every encouragement and advantage if he would do so, but Columbanus for different reasons did not think it advisable to accept this kind offer. And so, having remained with Clotaire a little while, he applied to him soon after for protection on his way to Italy, through the realm of king Theodebert of Austrasia. Clotaire granted his request, and gave him an escort, by whom he was brought first to Paris, and thence to Meaux, where he was kindly received by a religiously disposed nobleman, named Channeric, who being a friend of the king of Austrasia undertook to bring Columbanus to him.†

Theodebert was delighted to see the Saint and anxiously endeavoured to induce him to take up his abode in his realm, promising “ to find him

* Jonas, cap. 22.

† ib. 25.

out lovely places, in every way suited to the purposes of servants of God, and neighbouring nations to preach to within reach on every side.”* A. D. 611.
Columbanus replied, that on those terms “he would stay for some time, and try whether he could sow the faith in the hearts of the people of those heathen states:” and so being allowed to choose a locality for himself, he embarked on the Rhine and proceeded towards Switzerland in quest of a suitable place to settle in. On their way they rested a little at Mentz, where they were kindly treated and supplied with necessaries by the bishop of the place: after which they again pursued their journey, and came by the river Limat in Switzerland to the lake of Zurich, and then by its western bank to the district now called the Canton of Zug. This place they liked so well that they proposed settling in it, but soon finding the inhabitants very untractable and ill-disposed, and that their efforts to do good among them only raised persecution against themselves, they removed thence to Arbona near the Lake of Constance, where they were entertained for seven days with much kind hospitality by a priest named Willimar. From him and others they learned, that there was a very convenient situation for their purpose at the ancient, but then ruinous, town of Bregenz; to which accord-

* *Ib.* cap. 26.

A. D. 611.

Account of
a miracle
attributed
to St. Co-
lumbanus.

ingly they next made their way with the aid of a boat and rowers provided by Willimar. Columbanus however on going about there a little, gave it as his opinion that the place "did not seem to him a satisfactory one; yet he agreed to stay there for some short time for the purpose of sowing the faith among those tribes,"* the Suevi, who lived in the neighbourhood, being a heathen and idolatrous people. While remaining here, he on one occasion found a number of them preparing to offer a libation, consisting of a huge vessel full of beer. Coming up to the vessel, he asked them what they were going to do with it: to which they replied that they were going to offer it to their god Woden: whereupon, according to Jonas's account, Columbanus came and blew into the vessel, and it immediately burst to pieces with a loud explosion, dashing all the frothing liquor about in a wonderful way, to the confusion of those idolators. He then preached to them against their superstitions, and set before them the truths of the Gospel, by which means many of them were converted to Christianity and received baptism, while some others that had once professed the Christian religion before, but had fallen away to heathenism, were brought once more to acknowledge the value of Evangelical truth.†

* Jonas, cap. 26. Lanigan's Ec. Hist. ii. 286.

† ib.

After having continued his efforts at Bregenz for some time, Columbanus began to think of visiting the Venetian territories inhabited by the Sclavi, "in order to illuminate their darkened understandings by the light of the Gospel, and make known the way of truth to a people that had ever from the beginning been wandering out of the way."* On considering the matter however, (or, as Jonas says, in consequence of an admonition received in a vision from heaven,) he came to the conclusion, "that the time for the conversion of that people to the faith was not yet at hand," and so continued for the present quiet in his place, waiting until circumstances should open for him a path to Italy.

A. D. 612.

Meanwhile, a quarrel that had arisen between the two brothers Theodebert and Theoderic (about the bounds of their respective kingdoms) while Columbanus was remaining with Clotaire, became more and more violent until at length it broke out in open war. Theodebert was defeated in a battle near Toul, and again at Tolbiac with great loss; and soon after taken by Theoderic and sent to his grandmother Brunhaut, by whose order he was a few days after, put to death.†

War between Theoderic and Theodebert;

the latter is put to death.

While the fight was going on at Tolbiac, Columbanus was sitting on an old oak trunk in

Anecdote of St. Columbanus, connected with this war.

* ib.

† ib. cap. 28.

A. D. 612.

one of his favourite solitudes reading a book. His only companion at the time being one of his followers named Chagnoaldus, the Saint began to converse with him on the subject of the war, when Chagnoaldus requested of him to pray for the success of Theodebert against their common enemy. But Columbanus replied, "What you recommend is unwise and contrary to the spirit of religion. For the Lord willeth not this, who hath commanded us to pray for our enemies."* This reply, whatever will be thought of its soundness in some respects, shows at least that Columbanus, notwithstanding the impetuous energy, which seems to have generally marked his character, was yet by grace enabled to overcome his passions, and exhibit a mild and Christian spirit of forgiveness towards those by whom he had been handled with much harshness.

Columbanus
removes
from Bre-
genz,

and settles
in Lom-
bardy.

And now perceiving the change of affairs that had taken place by the war, and the increase of power that accrued to his enemies Theoderic and Brunechild, Columbanus lost no time in hastening to get beyond their reach, and removing to Italy, accompanied by his brethren, except one named Gallus, who was left behind, ill of a fever. In the same year (612) Columbanus arrived in Italy, (after having spent about

* Jones, cap. 29. See the petitions for the Queen in our Litany.

a year at Bregenz,) and was very kindly received by Agilulf, king of the Lombards, who gave him leave to settle in whatsoever part of his dominions he chose. While at Milan he "confuted the Arians by the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and wrote a very learned tract against them."* And some time after (apparently in 613) he addressed his celebrated letter to Pope Boniface IV., relative to the question of the Three Chapters, which was still troubling a large portion of the Church. This letter was penned at the request of King Agilulf, who pressed Columbanus to write it, with a view to put an end, if possible, to the schism by which his kingdom was distracted. Of the contents of this important document we shall speak more particularly in the next chapter.

A. D. 612.

In the same year (613) Columbanus founded his famous monastery of Bobio in the Appennines, among the Lombards, and near the river Trebia, where Hannibal wintered when invading Italy, and where also he suffered most severe losses of men, horses, and elephants. Columbanus was attracted to this wild spot by accounts that he received of some advantages for his plans which it possessed; such as the existence of an old church there, in a ruinous state, but yet not past restoring; and also plenty of water and a

He founds
the monaste-
ry of Bobio.
A. D. 613.

* Lanigan, II. 269. Jonas, cap. 29.

A. D. 613.

good supply of fish. The Saint and his companions very soon got the church into a state of perfect repair, and then added such other buildings as were necessary for the support of their monastic life.*

Clotaire, becoming master of Austrasia and Burgundy, invites St. Columbanus to return to France.

The Saint declines the invitation.

Meanwhile Theoderic having died at Metz, was succeeded by his son Sigebert. But the kingdom was soon after invaded and taken possession of by Clotaire, who cruelly put to death Sigebert and five of his brothers, together with their wicked guardian Brunchild; an act which was only too much of a piece with most of the other transactions of a kindred nature in Gaul at that time. Clotaire however, was very friendly to Columbanus; and was anxious, now that he was master of the entire country, to bring him back from Italy to settle in France again: for which purpose therefore he commissioned Eustasius, Columbanus's successor at Luxeu, to journey to Bobio with some others, and give the Saint a public and formal invitation from the king to return to Burgundy. Columbanus was very glad to see Eustasius again, and received Clotaire's message with pleasure. He declined however accepting the invitation conveyed to him, and requested Eustasius to apologise to the king for his not coming: but at the same time recommended his followers at Luxeu to Clotaire's

* Jonas, ib.

favour and protection. He also sent to the French monarch, by the hand of Eustasius, a letter, which though full of wholesome reproofs and admonitions concerning his conduct, was yet well received by the king, who evinced much satisfaction at getting it, and also complied with the Saint's request, by taking Luxeu under his protection and special patronage. He moreover provided it with an annual income, and further gave permission to the occupants to extend its boundaries as they pleased. About a year after the return of Eustasius to France, Columbanus died on the 21st of November, A. D. 615, and was buried at Bobio, having lived to a good old age somewhat exceeding seventy-two years.*

A. D. 614.

His death,
A. D. 615.

Some writers have represented St. Columbanus as not properly entitled to the name of a missionary, his character having been rather, according to those writers, that of a promoter of asceticism in the Church,† and his object in going abroad having been, (in their opinion) not so much to preach the Gospel to the heathen, as

Whether Columbanus can rightly be called a missionary, doubted by some;

* Lanigan, ii. 297.

† Fleury seems to be of this opinion; his words are, *Pour se détacher du monde de plus en plus, il se proposa de passer dans un terre étrangère à l'exemple d'Abraham.* (Hist. Eccles. liv. 35. § 9.) The Rev. W. G. Todd, (*Church of St. Patrick*, p. 67,) is still more explicit: but these authors do not seem to represent fairly the sense of the words used by Jonas, (cap. 3,) in reference to this subject: and therefore after careful examination of the matter, I cannot help concluding that Dr. Lanigan is quite correct in attributing to the expedition of St. Columbanus, and his companions, a missionary character. (See his *Eccles. Hist.* ii. 262.)

A. D. 615.
 but without
 sufficient
 reason.

to separate himself from the world and induce other Christians to do likewise. This however does not appear to be a sufficiently correct or satisfactory view of the matter, but is rather at variance with the accounts given us in his own Life, and in those of his immediate successors. For Jonas, when first mentioning Columbanus's desire to go abroad, expressly states that the motive which influenced him was the kindling in his heart of that fire concerning which the Lord saith in the Gospel, "*I am come to send fire on the earth !*" a passage evidently applied by Jonas to the spreading of the Christian religion in the world. And in choosing a place to settle in, one of the great objects which Columbanus kept in view, was to have near him persons to preach to, and heathens especially. His disciples likewise, after his departure from among them, did by his injunction carry on the same work of labouring for the conversion of those around them to the profession of the Christian faith.* It was true indeed that he was a great promoter of the monastic life, but it appears to have been chiefly with a view to the ulterior object of promoting the knowledge and practice of religion, as received by himself, among those who were either not at all, or else in name only, Christians. The monastic

* Eustasii Vita, inter opp. Bed. tom. iii. Coll. 243, 244.

system was indeed, the common instrument employed in those days, for missionary purposes.

A. D. 615.

Columbanus, it seems, did not place his monasteries under episcopal control, so that they appear at first to have been subject to no other authority except that of the kings in whose dominions they were founded. But we find that in the time of Bertolf, who was next abbot of Bobio after Attala, Columbanus's own immediate successor there, an attempt was made to reduce that monastery under the control of the bishop of a neighbouring city. Bertolf however resisted the endeavour, apparently on the plea that communities like his, far away from the episcopal city, ought by right to be free from the bishop's jurisdiction: but at length finding himself in danger of being forced to submit, he adopted the alternative of making a journey to Rome, to visit Pope Honorius, and seek the protection of his influence. And this plan succeeded so far; for Honorius received him very kindly, made many inquiries about his rule, and expressed much satisfaction at his visit: and finally he sent him away with "a privilege from the Apostolic See, prohibiting any bishop from attempting to exercise jurisdiction in the aforesaid community, upon any plea whatever."* This policy on the part of Pope Honorius

The monasteries of Columbanus at first independent of episcopal control.

This immunity confirmed in the case of Bobio by Pope Honorius I.

* Vita St. Bertolfi, inter opp. Bed. coll. 249.

A. D. 615.

Extent of
Columbanus's influ-
ence in the
Continental
Churches.

had naturally the effect of attaching the followers of Columbanus more closely to the see of Rome, and bringing them more completely under its authority and control.

The influence exercised by the labours of Columbanus upon the Continental Church of the seventh century must have been very considerable, whether we regard the great energy and boldness of his own character, his intimacy with different kings, and the respect with which they treated him, the number, activity, and devotedness of his followers, and the eminence to which they attained, or the low and wretched state of religion at that time in the country where they were labouring; things being then in such a condition that Pope Gregory the Great was obliged to write many letters to the French princes, and to Brunechild and her two grandsons in particular, complaining of the profligate and simoniacal practices of the clergy in their dominions, and calling upon them to summon a council to put an end to such abuses.* And Columbanus himself when writing to Pope Gregory, inquires, among other things, whether it were well to hold communion with those simoniacal clergy or not, so much was he scandalised at their irregularities.†

* Vid. S. Greg, Mag. opp. Paris, 1705. tom. ii. coll. 782, 1007, 1015, 016, &c. &c.

† ib. 1038.

Before the time of Jonas, or within less perhaps than twenty years from the death of Columbanus, Luxeu alone had produced five bishops, whose sees were situated in different parts of the French realm. They were, Donatus of Besançon, Rachnacarius of Augt and Basle, Chagnoldus of Laon, Acharius of Noyen and Tournay, and Audemar or St. Omer of Boulogne and Terouane.* And as for monasteries under his rule, established either by his own immediate disciples, or by others in their time, there was no end to them. Many of the French bishops also having had occasion to give more particular attention to the subject, were led to form a most favourable opinion of the discipline introduced by Columbanus; which they thenceforth favoured and propagated to a wonderful extent. And so much did the mischievous rage for monastic celibacy come into fashion generally at that time, that almost all France ere long became studded over with convents not only for men, but for women also;† institutions, which admitting to the full whatever good may have been connected with them, were yet almost from the very first, seminaries but too fruitful of religious error, and little calculated to arrest the downward progress of corruption in doctrine and

A. D. 615.

Five bishops
educated at
Luxeu in its
earliest
days.

Spread of
monachism
in France
according to
the Rule of
Columbanus after his
own time.

* Jonas, cap. 13. Vit. S. Eust. Fleury, Ec. Hist. liv. 37. § 27.

† Vit. S. Eustas. opp. Bed. col. 247.

A. D. 615.

practice, that was already (even in the middle of the seventh century) painfully far advanced, and that too among the generality of professing Christians. No further proof need be required of this melancholy fact, than the circumstance that we read, in the ancient lives of the "Saints" of that age, of prayers *to the dead*, and to God *by their merits*, spoken of as commendable indications of Christian piety and true holiness.* Of the religious doctrines inculcated by St. Columbanus himself, we shall speak more particularly in the next chapter.

CHAP. IX.

OF THE WRITINGS OF ST. COLUMBANUS.

A. D. 615.

Enumera-
tion of the
writings of
St. Colum-
banus.

ST. COLUMBANUS was the author of many interesting compositions, several of which have been preserved to our own time. They are all written in Latin, and consist of, 1. A Rule for Monks, &c.; 2. Letters, such as have been already noticed, connected with the important questions about ecclesiastical matters in which he was engaged; 3. Some short sermons; and, 4. One or two poetical pieces. These latter contain some pretty parts, and are

* Vid Vit. S. Attalæ, ib. col. 224. et Vit. S. Arnolfi, ib. col. 257.

interesting in their way, but are not of sufficient importance to require further notice in a work of such narrow limits as the present. Of his other writings here mentioned we shall give the reader a more particular account; as they throw much light on the religious system of the Irish of that period. We shall also find it expedient to introduce very large extracts from them, believing that the very words of those original documents, will be far more interesting to the reader, and far more likely to enlarge his knowledge, than any comments of our own that might be contained in the same space. What makes a copious selection of extracts the more valuable in this case, is the circumstance that the only work, in which the collected remains of St. Columbanus have been as yet published, is an extremely rare and expensive book, and not likely to be available to many of the readers of the present volume.*

A. D. 615.

The *Monastic Rule* of St. Columbanus is a short treatise containing a system of laws for the government of the communities which he organised. It is chiefly employed in inculcating what were regarded as the great monastic virtues, viz., humility, mortification of the flesh and spirit, chastity, &c. And it is followed by another tract

His Monastic Rule, &c.

* The title of it is given in the Note, p. 256, *supra*. It is a small folio volume, and sells for from £30 to £40.

A. D. 615. entitled "Of the daily Pénances of Monks," i.e. an account of the different punishments with which all violations of the Rule were visited.*

The punishments which were enacted against the violation of it.

These punishments were of different kinds. The most common in use appears to have been that which consisted of a certain number of stripes, inflicted with a whip: of which six were applied for the correction of lighter offences, and a larger number in proportion as the transgression assumed a graver character, up to two hundred; but never more than twenty-five at a time. Some faults again were punished by imposition of silence, or of more than ordinary fasting: and for others the offender was required to recite a certain number of psalms. We may suppose that the sort of punishment in each case was regulated partly by the age and other circumstances of the culprit, as the subjects of this discipline were of all ages; and although the younger ones who were receiving their education in the monastic school, did not at first embrace the vows of that sort of life, or become subject to the entire system, yet they must have been partly governed by it, and liable to the penalties it enjoined in case of disobedience.

* A pretty good account of these rules is given by Fleury, *Hist. Eccles.* liv. 35, 10. tom. viii. Par. 1701. p. 22: also in the *Hist. de l'Eglise Gallicane*, by the Jesuit M. Languet, liv. viii. l'An. 590. tom. iii. p. 285. Par. 1732.

The practice of imposing the recitation of psalms as a punishment must be allowed to have been a most injudicious and mischievous one, and naturally calculated to convert the sweet and pleasant study of this beautiful portion of the Divine Word, into a distasteful and irksome labour.

A. D. 615.
One of them
of a mis-
chievous
tendency.

Looking more minutely into the Monastic Rule of St. Columbanus, we find it divided into ten short chapters, under the following heads respectively, viz.: 1. Of Obedience. 2. Silence. 3. Food and Drink. 4. On Repressing Cupidity. 5. Of Repressing Vanity. 6. Charity. 7. Divine Service. 8. Discretion. 9. Mortification. 10. Perfection of the Monastic Life. We shall now give the reader a few passages extracted from the more striking parts of this Rule, which will enable him to form a sufficient idea of its general contents.

Contents of
the Monastic
Rule of
St. Colum-
banus.

The strictness of the discipline which it enjoined, (which Archbishop Ussher notices with commendation,*) is sufficiently indicated by the penalties that were prescribed for the disobedient: "If any brother be disobedient," says the law concerning punishments, he shall fast "two days, with one biscuit and water. If any say, I will not do it, three days with one biscuit and water. If any murmur, two days with one biscuit and water. If any do not ask leave, or

Strictness of
the disci-
pline en-
forced by it,
in regard to
obedience.

* Religion of the Anc. Ir., ch. vi.

A. D. 615.

Nature of
the regula-
tion about
silence.The rule
about fast-
ing, &c.

tell an excuse, two days with one biscuit and water :” and so in other particulars.* The monks of Columbanus “were not” however “taught to vaunt of their state of perfection and works of supererogation,” but were on the contrary admonished in the Rule itself to take a lesson of humility and self-abasement before God, from the parable of the Pharisee and Publican.

The rule concerning silence enjoined that they should “speak with caution,”† and only about necessary matters, or such as were useful for edification, avoiding all idle words. And among the laws relating to punishments one was, that, “Whoever shall speak in an elevated or noisy tone of voice, shall be liable to six stripes.”‡ This regulation was judged necessary as a means of guarding against the confusion that might arise from any thing like loud and boisterous conversation where so many were assembled together : it was looked upon as calculated to prevent mutual interruption in their studies, and to restrain at meal-times any approach to thoughtless revelry or unseemly mirth.

The rule relating to their food and fasting ran as follows :§ “The monks’ food is to be of humble quality, and taken towards evening,

* Columban. de Quotid. Pen. Monach. cap. 10.

† Reg. S. Columban, cap. 2.

‡ Lib. de Q. P. Monachorum, c. 1.

§ Vid Reg. S. Col. cap. 3. Lanigan, vol. iv. p. 350.

avoiding satiety and excess of drink, that it may support, and not hurt them. Let it be, vegetables, pulse, meal mixed with water, with a little biscuit; so as that the stomach may not be overloaded, nor the mind clogged: for they who long after the eternal prize, must study profit and utility alone. Therefore our use of food is to be moderated in the same way as our labour is to be moderated: since this is true discretion, to secure the possibility of spiritual improvement, along with the abstinence that macerates the flesh. For if abstinence shall be such as to exceed due bounds, it will be a vice, not a virtue; for virtue supports and implies many good works. Therefore fasting is to be practised every day, as well as the use of refreshments every day: and while food is to be taken every day, the indulgence allowed to the body should at the same time be of an humble and sparing character; because our daily eating is with a view to our daily improving, daily praying, daily labouring, and daily reading.”

A. D. 615.

The biscuits alluded to in this Rule, weighed, we are told, six ounces each, and two of them used to be given to each monk every day.* As for their drink, we learn from Jonas† that they used beer, prepared from barley and other kinds of corn, a beverage which was then common (as

Some further particulars relating to their diet.

* ib.

† Vid. S. Col. cap. 15.

A. D. 615.

the same author notes) among the French, Germans, Britons, Irish, and other nations of Europe. The use of it by the followers of Columbanus is noticed also in the Rule for Penances, where it is enacted, that "if any one were to cause the waste of any considerable quantity of beer by spilling it, he should himself feel the loss of it, for so many days, out of that which he had been regularly accustomed to receive as his own allowance, drinking water in place of beer in the mean time."*

Their abstinence on
Wednesdays
and Fridays,
&c.

The abstaining from food until evening appears not to have been very strictly observed or enjoined, except on Wednesdays and Fridays. With respect to these two days, the Rule of Penances enacted, that "if any one were to eat," on them, "before the ninth hour, [i.e. three o'clock,] unless he were weak," he should fast for two days "on bread and water."† On ordinary occasions, fish was sometimes used by the followers of Columbanus: but they and the old monks of Ireland generally appear to have abstained from flesh meat, although they used to treat their guests and strangers to it.‡ The monasteries however often had sheep and cows belonging to them, and St. Columba possessed both at Hy; they being found useful for supplying the monks

* Lib. de Q. P. Monach. c. 3.

† Vid. Lanigan, ut sup.

‡ Adamn. Vit. S. Col. lib. i. c. 41. ii. 16. &c. Cogitosus Vit. S. Brig. cap. 8, 16, 20. Colgan, AA. SS. tom. i. p. 221.

with wool for their clothing, and milk for food ; A. D. 615
for this latter article and eggs were allowed to
be used by the monks, even on days of the
strictest fasting in Lent.

The Rule for the Order of Divine Service The rule
relating to
Divine
Service.
regulated the number of psalms, &c., which
were to be used on the several occasions in the
day on which the monks assembled together for
worship. Three psalms, with versicles and
prayers, were used at each of the canonical
hours of the day ; and a still greater number at
the services of the night ; and on Saturday and
Sunday again a greater number than on the
other nights of the week. Moreover the number
of psalms and length of the services used at
night, were augmented from week to week as
the nights became longer and longer in the
winter, and again diminished in like manner, as
the spring advanced and the nights grew shorter :
and according to this arrangement the entire
Psalter used to be read through on the two
nights of Saturday and Sunday in the dead of
winter ; seventy-five psalms being read in one
night.* His arrangement of these services Co-
lumbanus probably borrowed from the earlier
monks of Ireland who lived before him. It

* Vide Fleury and Langueval, ut sup : also Lanigan, and the original
in Fleming's Collection. Vid. also Isaac Walton's Life of George
Herbert, and the account given in it of Nicholas Ferrar, deacon of the
Church of England, in whose family the entire Psalter was read through
every day.

A. D. 615.
 A doubt
 suggested as
 to the genuineness of
 the Rule as
 we have it.

seems difficult to conceive however that we possess the Rules connected with either this or any other point of discipline, in exactly the same state in which Columbanus drew them up more than twelve hundred years ago. For if any changes were made after his time in the Rule, as used by his followers, it is manifestly probable that the copies of the Rule which would be preserved to our time, would not be in the original form, but in the altered one. There are obvious reasons for changes creeping into a Rule of this kind, which would not equally apply to historical or other general compositions.

Penalties
 connected
 with the
 Monks' be-
 haviour at
 prayers.

To secure propriety of demeanour during divine service, punishments were appointed (in the Rule for Penances) for such as exhibited inattention or irreverence. Thus we find one regulation to this effect. "Whoever coughs at the beginning of the Psalm, and does not sing out well, six stripes:" and another running thus, "Whoever smiles during the Order of Prayer, six stripes."* The service which they used was composed in Latin, that being a sort of universal language in the west of Europe in their time: but they did not choose it from any idea that other tongues were unsuited to the public worship of God, or from supposing that it was lawful to use in the congregation a language which the people did not understand.† That

* Lib. de Q. P. Monach.

† ib. cap. 4. Appendix, No. 5.

they, who understood Latin well, should use it in their services, was of course a thing entirely unobjectionable. We may add here that their sacred offices were remarked as being peculiar, and distinguished from others by their including a larger number than was usual, "of prayers or collects."* A. D. 616.

Besides their common worship Columbanus also carefully instructed his monks in the duty of private prayer, endeavouring to impress on them, that the object to seek after in this respect, was the prayer of the heart, and constant communion of the soul with God. They were further enjoined never to enter nor leave any of the houses belonging to their community without asking a blessing, a pious custom, which they founded on the words of Ps. cxxi. (v. 7, 8.) Some other of their observances were less edifying, and savoured more of superstition, such as the constant use of the sign of the cross, with which they were accustomed to mark their vessels, spoons, lamps, &c., previously to using them: and which they employed also on various other occasions. Further observations on their devotions, &c.

From what has been now said, the reader may form a pretty good general notion of the sort of discipline adopted in the monasteries of St. Columbanus, according to his Rule, and the The Penitential of St. Columbanus.

* Vit. S. Eustas. Opp. Bed. tom. iii. col. 245.

A. D. 615.

penal system annexed to it. There is also attributed to him another work called a Penitential, which enumerates the canonical punishments in force against all sorts of sins, and offenders of all conditions, but this we need not dwell on. It seems to be interesting only as indicating the low state of religion which could have called forth such regulations as it comprehends.

His sermons
and letters.

And now we pass to the consideration of the sermons and letters of Columbanus, which afford much more interesting matter for our contemplation. The occasions on which the different letters alluded to, were written, have been already noticed in his history. The Sermons are supposed to have been delivered as lectures to the monks in the course of their daily religious exercises; and this attaches to them a peculiar interest as illustrations of the kind of practical lessons which Columbanus chose for the instruction of those under his charge.* It will be convenient to notice them and the letters in connection with one another, as the same subjects are occasionally touched upon in both.

Account of
his Epistle
to Pope
Gregory.
A. D. 602.

Of the writings now under consideration, the first in order of time are the letters to Pope Gregory the Great and to the French bishops, on the subject of the Easter controversy. The

* Vid. the Editor's Preface to these Sermons, in Fleming's Collection, p. 42, and Ceillier's account of them in his *Histoire des Auteurs Sacres & Ecclesiastiques*, tom. xvii. p. 480. par. 1750.

following passages from the former will enable the reader to understand the nature of the "apostolical freedom," as Dr. Lanigan calls it, which Columbanus made use of in addressing the bishops of Rome. It is to be remembered, that Gregory the Great, (known also as Saint Gregory,) to whom this letter was written, has been looked upon as one of the brightest ornaments of the papal chair; whose character was excelled by none, perhaps, of the bishops of that see, since the times of the Apostles. After opening with a respectful salutation, and explaining the occasion of his letter to him, Columbanus proceeds to address this famous pontiff in the following terms:—

A. D. 602.

"How is it then that you with all your wisdom, you, the brilliant light of whose sanctified talents is shining abroad throughout the world, are induced to support this dark P^aschal system? I wonder, I confess, that the erroneous practice of Gaul has not been long since abolished by you You are afraid perhaps of incurring the charge of a taste for novelty, and are content with the authority of your predecessors, and of Pope Leo in particular. But do not, I beseech you, in a matter of such importance, give way to the dictates of humility or gravity only, as they are often mistaken. It may be

Extracts
from this
Epistle.

A. D. 602.

Columbanus's high opinion of his countrymen.

that in this affair *a living dog is better than a dead lion*; [or Leo: *] for a living saint may correct errors that have not been corrected by another greater one. For observe, that Victorius was never adopted by our teachers and the old Irish, who were most able philosophers and calculators of mathematical tables; but was rather looked upon by them as a subject for ridicule or indulgence, than as an authority. Therefore in favour of me, a poor hesitating stranger rather than one affecting to be learned, direct hither the support of your opinion, and disdain not promptly to transmit the influence of your clemency, in order to the restraining of this storm that rages around us. Because after the reading of such weighty authors as I have consulted, it does not satisfy me to be met with that one sentence of those bishops, who have nothing to say, but, *We must not celebrate our Passover with the Jews*. Bishop Victor said this long ago, but none of the Eastern Christians adopted his comment."

Respect of the Irish for St. Jerome's authority.

Columbanus then enters further into the argument against the Roman Easter, and urges in particular that his own usage being founded on the authority of God's Word, it was unlawful for

* The name of Pope Leo, is the same as the Latin for a lion, and Columbanus here plays upon this ambiguity in the term.

human authority to establish a different one. He intimates also to Gregory that one great reason with the Irish for preferring Anatolius's tables to those of Victorius, was, that Anatolius had been mentioned with commendation by St. Jerome, who was a great favourite of the Irish theologians,* as appears from another passage in this part of the same letter, the words of which are as follows :—

A. D. 602.

“ Let your vigilance then be careful, in weighing the credit of the two authors aforesaid, who are quite contrary to one another, that there be no disagreement between yourself and Jerome in the expression of your sentiments For I confess to you plainly, that the man who contradicts the authority of St. Jerome will be looked upon as a heretic, and rejected with scorn by the Churches of the West. For as far as the Divine Scriptures are concerned, they entertain sentiments decidedly and wholly accordant with his. So much on the subject of Easter.”†

Remark of Columbanus to Pope Gregory on the subject.

Columbanus then asks Gregory's advice as to the manner in which he ought to behave towards

The simony of the French prelates noticed in this Epistle.

* It is a curious circumstance that St. Jerome is also the authority to which our Reformed Church still refers, for a correct statement concerning the canon of Holy Scripture, as connected with the Apocrypha. See Art. VI. in the *Book of Common Prayer*. See also p. 158, sup.

† “ This was saying plainly enough that he would not submit to the decision he asked for, unless it agreed with his own prejudices.” Such is the just comment of the French Jesuit upon this sentence of Columbanus's letter. Vid. Languet, *Hist. de l'Egl. Gal. liv. 9, l'An. 602. t. iii. p. 371.*

A. D. 602.

bishops that had been uncanonically ordained by simony, and whether he should hold communion with them, as there were known to be many such, he says, in the province where he was. This question seems somewhat like a shrewd insinuation, that those bishops of Gaul, who were most strenuous and active in their proceedings against himself, might be better occupied in purging away the corruptions prevalent among their own body, than in interfering unnecessarily with him about such a point as that of Easter.

Columbanus applies to Gregory for Commentaries on the Scriptures.

He then tells the Pope that he had read with great delight and profit his celebrated work on the Pastoral Office; and he requests him to send him a copy of his commentaries on Ezekiel, mentioning at the same time that he had read Jerome's notes on that prophet, but that they did not expound half the book. He also begs for some comments, either by Gregory himself, or else by some other divine, upon the latter portion of the Song of Solomon, beginning at the words, *I will get me to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense*,* to the end of the book: and further, he adds, that he would feel greatly indebted for an exposition of the entire of Zechariah—after which, towards the close, he proceeds thus:—

Conclusion of his letter:

“Peace be with you, and with your people;—regard with indulgence, blessed Pope, I entreat

* Ch. iv. v. 6.

of you, my presumption in writing thus boldly :
 and I pray you even once in your holy prayers
 to our common Lord, to pray for me a most vile
 sinner. I think it needless to recommend to
 you my brethren here, whom the Saviour will
 have to be received, as those that walk in His
 name. And now, *if*, as I have heard from
 your pious friend Candidus, *you will be disposed
 to give me this answer, that what is established
 by the authority of antiquity cannot be altered,*
 certainly ERROR CAN LAY CLAIM TO ANTI-
 QUITY, BUT THE TRUTH WHICH CONDEMNS IT
 IS ALWAYS OF HIGHER ANTIQUITY STILL."

A. D. 602..

So ends this remarkable epistle. We shall
 not here delay to make any comments upon its
 contents, but pass to give some further account
 of the other which Columbanus wrote about the
 same time to the prelates of Gaul. The super-
 scription of it is as follows :*

Letter of
 Columba-
 nus to the
 French
 prelates.

"To our holy lords, and fathers, or brethren, in
 Christ, the bishops, presbyters, and other or-
 ders of Holy Church, I Columba,† sinner, send
 greeting in Christ."

After first expressing the satisfaction he felt
 at seeing so many men eminent for piety assem-
 bled on his account, to treat of faith and of good
 works, and praying for a blessing from Christ

* Vid. Fleming's *Collect. Sac.* p. 113.

† Vid. p. 249, sup. not.

A. D. 602. upon their deliberations, he comes to the main point of his letter, in the following interesting passage :—

Extracts
from this
Epistle.

“ One thing therefore I beg of your holy assemblage, which is, that you will patiently and kindly bear with my folly, and the arrogant presumption, as some call it, of my writing to you ; a step extorted by the necessity of the case, and not suggested by vanity, as the very humbleness of my style makes evident. And considering that I am not the originator of this diversity, and that it is for Christ the Saviour, our common Lord and God, that I have come a stranger to sojourn in this land, I pray you by our common Lord, and adjure you by Him who is to judge the quick and dead, (if ye be worthy to be confessed by Him who will say to many, *Verily I say unto you, I never knew you,*) that you will allow me, in the spirit of peace and charity, to live in silence among these woods, beside the bones of our brethren, seventeen in number, who have departed this life, in the same manner as we have been allowed to live among you these twelve years past ; that we may in accordance with our bounden duty, offer up our prayers in your behalf, as we have been doing heretofore. Let us, I implore you, be content to live together here in Gaul, destined as we are to live together in the kingdom of heaven, if we be counted worthy

of that blessing. For we have one kingdom promised to us, and one hope of our calling in Christ, with whom we are to reign together, that is, if we first suffer with Him here, that we may also together with Him be glorified. I am aware that to many this talkativeness of mine will appear superfluous: but I have judged it better that you too should know what are the subjects that we here handle and study with one another. For these are our canons, the commandments of the Lord and of the Apostles: in these is our faith: these are our arms, our shield and sword; these our defence: these are they that have influenced us to leave our native land: these here also we struggle, though in our lukewarm way, to observe: in these we desire and pray that we may persevere until death, as we have seen our elders do before us. Be it your part then, holy fathers, to consider well what course you adopt towards these aged poor and pilgrim veterans: for I am of opinion that you will find it better to comfort, than to disturb them."

A. D. 602.

His veneration for the Holy Scriptures.

Columbanus then introduces, (as usual in this controversy) the favourite contrast between the respective merits of the different calculations of Anatolius and Victorius,* and after commending

* Vid. p. 196 sup. *not.* and pp. 290, 291, and Hieronym. *Opp.* tom. 2. *crit.* 914. The Irish praised Anatolius highly, as an authority in support of their mode of determining the *Paschal week*, but they did not however adopt his *cycle*. Vid. *Bed. Ec. Hist.* iii. 26.

A. D. 602.

the former as being much superior to the latter, he presently proceeds thus:—

He wishes to refer the question at issue to the authority of the Sacred Volume.

“Do you then make your choice which of the two you are disposed to follow, and which you can best confide in, according to that saying of the Apostle, *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.** Far be it from me to struggle to maintain a contest with you, to furnish our adversaries, Jews, or heretics, or gentile heathen, with occasion of joy, in witnessing the contention going on among us Christians. Far, far indeed, from us, be such a course. For independently of it, we may mutually agree, either for each one of us to abide with the Lord in that mode of life wherein he hath been called, if both traditions be good: or else, that the books should be read on both sides with peace and humility, and without any thing of a contentious spirit, and whatever system accords most with the Old and New Testaments, that that should be observed without ill feeling on the part of any one. For if it be of God, that you should expel me from this solitude, which for the sake of my Lord Jesus Christ, I have come across the sea to dwell in, it shall be mine to use that language of the Prophet,† *If this tempest be upon you for*

* Thes. v. 21. Vid. pp. 154, 157, sup.

† Columbanus here, (as in other places) plays upon the identity of his name with that of the Prophet in question. See p. 249, note.

*my sake, take me up and cast me into the sea, that this commotion may cease from you.** Yet be it your part first, to make the effort, after the example of those sailors, to rescue, in the bowels of your compassion, the endangered passenger; as they did, although being heathens; according to the Scripture narrative, which says, *And the men struggled to return to the land, but they could not, for the sea wrought, and the swelling of the waves increased.†* Finally, to bring this communication to a close, I would suggest, although it may be presumptuous, that when there are so many walking and running in the wide and broad way of this world, if there be found some few who bend their steps toward the strait road, through the narrow and strait gate that leadeth unto life, according to our Lord's precept, such persons should rather be brought on their way to life, than hindered, by you; lest perchance you too, as well as the Pharisees, should come in for your share of that censure of our Lord, *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men, and enter not in yourselves, nor allow those that are entering to go in.‡* But some one will say," adds Columbanus, "Are not we entering into the kingdom of heaven?" an objection which he then pro-

A. D. 602.

He compares his case with that of the Prophet Jonah.

* Jonah, 1, 12.

† Ib. v. 13.

‡ S. Matt. 23, 13.

A. D. 602.

ceeds to answer, but which we need not here enlarge upon.

After this he urges on the prelates whom he addressed, the necessity of mutual forbearance and love, quoting on this subject the words of our Lord in St. John's Gospel, ch. xiv. v. 15 ; xiii. 35 ; xv. 12 ; and then concludes the epistle with the following affectionate and Christian sentiments.

His closing
observations
on mutual
affection
and for-
bearance.

“ In order then that we may love one another in unfeigned charity, let us diligently consider the precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and hasten, so far as we understand, to put them in practice ; that by His doctrine the entire Church may be hastened on with one impulse of exceeding great fervour, in the pursuit of heavenly things. May He of His own free grace vouchsafe to us this blessing, that we may all hate the world, and love Him only, and Him desire, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Finally, fathers, pray for us, as we also do, unworthy though we be, for you : and do not regard us in the light of aliens ; for we are fellow members of one body, whether we be French, or Britons, or Irish, or whatever be our nation. Let us then, all nations, rejoice in the acknowledging of the faith, and confession of the Son of God ; and hasten forward all of us, to *advance to the*

Conclusion
of the letter.

*perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Jesus Christ ;** in whom may we love one another, speak well of one another, correct one another, visit one another, pray for one another, that with one another we may reign and have joy in His presence. Give your indulgence, I beg of you all, most forbearing and holy fathers and brethren, to my talkativeness and boldness in attempting a task beyond my powers."

A. D. 602.

We see with what reverence Columbanus mentions the Holy Scriptures in this letter, as the great foundation of his faith and practice ; the same feature is also observable in many other passages of his writings, as for instance in the following one from his Sermon on the Mortification of Sin.† "Excepting those statements," (says he,) "which either the Law, or the Prophets, or the Gospel, or the Apostles, have made to us, solemn silence ought to be observed, as far as other authorities are concerned, with respect to the Trinity. For it is God's testimony alone that is to be credited concerning God, that is, concerning Himself. And this testimony concerning Himself, he has given, either in the Law, or in a Prophet, or in the Gospel, or in an Apostle, or in special cases, to

Other statements of St. Columbanus relative to the unparalleled authority of Holy Scripture.

He speaks of it as the sole foundation of belief in the Trinity.

* Ephes. iv. 13.

† Vid. Fleming, *Collect. Sac. Instr.* II.

A. D. 602. individuals, either by Himself, or by an Angel. But as for disputation, or human genius, or any vaunted wisdom, such as is liable to error even in reasonings connected with this world, it cannot be competent to judge fully of the Deity, but is rather to be looked upon as sacrilegious and impious in such speculations about God." Columbanus, it would seem, was not one of those who thought it necessary to refer to any other authority than the statements of Holy Scripture, to prove the all-important doctrine of the Trinity.

His regard
for the Holy
Scriptures,
and love of
Ireland,
noticed in
his letter to
Pope Boni-
face IV.

And again in his famous letter to Pope Boniface, (of which we shall have to speak more at large presently,) the same regard for the Holy Scriptures as the highest standard of authority in matters of Christian faith, manifests itself in connection with another interesting feature of his character, which has also appeared in another extract already given, viz., his constant remembrance of his native land, and the honest pride he felt, even when far away from it among strangers, in referring back to the island of his birth. To Boniface he says: "For we are disciples of St. Peter and St. Paul, and of all the disciples, who wrote, by the Holy Ghost, the divine canon; thorough Irishmen are we, inhabitants of the very ends of the earth, but however, men that receive nothing beyond the teaching of the Evangelists and Apostles."

The letter which Columbanus wrote from Nantes to his brethren at Luxeu, after he had himself been exiled from that place, contains much that is interesting: and even at the risk of extending this chapter beyond its due limits we cannot refrain from laying before the reader at least one specimen of its contents: it is a paragraph on the important subject of the source and nature of perseverance in the Christian life; the words of which are these:*

A. D. 610.
His letter to the brethren at Luxeu, from his exile,
A. D. 610.

“Let us then patiently endure all adversities in support of the truth, that we may be partakers of the sufferings of the Lord: for *if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with him.*† And what further is now to be added but perseverance? For *he that shall persevere unto the end, the same shall be saved.*‡ For it is in the end the trial consists, and it is at the close of the scene the song of praise is sung. But in order to be persevering let every one pray constantly for God’s assistance, with all humility of mind; for *it is not,*§ saith [the Scripture] *of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.* Because the mercy of God is greater and better than the life of man however good:|| and none are worthy of

Perseverance in the Faith, possible only through the assistance of Divine Grace.

* *Flem. Collect. Sac.* p. 133. *Bibl. PP. Lugd.* t. 12. p. 26.

† 2 Tim. ii. 12.

‡ S. Matt. 24, 13.

§ Rom. ix. 16.

|| On this sentence, we are referred, in Fleming, to Ps. 63, v. 3.

A. D. 610.

mercy, but those who confess themselves to be wretched before God, and feel that they are unworthy of salvation by themselves, unless by the sole mercy of the Lord they be rescued from so great evils. And however they may be conscious to themselves of having performed good works, yet fearing the judgment of God,* and mourning over the many unrighteous deeds which they have committed, they repose an humble confidence in God's mercy only: and their perfect fear is the more acceptable to him, the more they study humility. *For the Lord's delight is in them that fear him, and in them that hope in His mercy.*† No one therefore can be saved by his own strength . . . but he only who, in fear and trembling, shall humbly make a right use of his privileges, (which are themselves also free gifts,) often praying according to the will of God, *Cast me not away from thy presence,*‡ and *turn me not away from thy commandments*: for it has often been the case that, as a certain writer saith, 'The excellence of their virtue has been to many an occasion of destruction,' because that when they were eminent for their virtues, they withdrew from the path of humility."§

* Compare with this, Art. XII. of our Church.

† Ps. 147, 11.

‡ Ps. 51, 11.

§ Towards the close of this letter, Columbanus mentions that before he had finished it, a messenger came to tell him that the ship which was to bring him to Ireland was getting ready to sail.

In connection with the preceding passage, the following one on the same subject, from the fifteenth of his Sermons, will be read with interest. The very brief discourse from which it is taken is entitled, *On fervency in serving God*.*

A. D. 610.
Statements
of Columbanus
relative to preventing
and co-operating
grace.

“Banishing from our hearts foolish and vain imaginations,” says Columbanus, “let us enter on the way of God, according to the rule for perfection of life; and advancing to those things that are before, forgetful of the things that are behind, that is, of temporal things, let us press forward with the apostle, saying to our Creator, *Draw us, we will run together after thee, for the savour of thy ointments*.† Of ourselves indeed we cannot arrive at the way of truth, or make progress in it; and for this reason let us ask for preventing grace, saying, *Draw us after thee, that so we may run to thee*. And there is a propriety in saying first, *Draw us after thee*, and then adding the expression, *We will run*; because we cannot begin a good work, except by divine grace preventing us; nor complete one, except by the same following us in it; whence it is said in that prayer, *And let thy grace, O Lord, prevent and follow us, &c.*”‡

* Fleming, Collect. Sac. Instruct. xv. p. 82.

† Song of Solomon, c. i. v. 3, 4.

‡ Vid. Collect for the 17th Sunday after Trinity.

A. D. 610.

Our limits, (already too widely extended if it could have been conveniently avoided) prevent us from enlarging any further in this place on the Sermons of Columbanus which are extant: in another part of this work however will be found two most interesting specimens of them.* At present it will be desirable to give the reader a somewhat fuller account of the celebrated letter to Pope Boniface IV., which is the last of the writings of our Saint that we need here notice.

Occasion of
Columbanus's letter
to Pope
Boniface
IV.
A.D. 613.

Of the occasion upon which this letter was written, the following account is given by one of the most eminent of Roman Catholic writers on the subject of Church History. "We ought to refer to this time," (i.e. A.D. 613,) says the Abbé Fleury,† "the letter that he wrote to Pope Boniface IV., on the question of the Three Chapters, at the request of King Agilulf, who favoured the defenders of them. St. Columbanus, misinformed as to the facts of the case, and prejudiced by the influence of the schismatical party, was under the impression that Pope Vigilius died a heretic, and so expresses astonishment at his name being recited with those of Catholic bishops. He exhorts the pope to purge from the suspicion of heresy, himself and his Church, by assembling a Council, in which he should

Columbanus thought
Pope Vigilius died a
heretic.

* See the Appendix, Nos. V. and VI. † Hist. Eccles. Liv. 37, c. 8.

make a precise definition of the faith: for he rejects the Fifth Council, as having approved of the error of Eutyches." But although this letter is written in a very independent spirit, and in such a style as to shew that Columbanus did not entertain any of those extravagant notions concerning papal power and infallibility which are cherished by modern Romanists, it contains at the same time many strong expressions of respect and reverence for the bishop of Rome as being the most exalted prelate in Europe, and as having authority, from the position and peculiar privileges of his see, to take the lead in resisting the ingress of error, and directing the exertions of others to promote the same end.

A. D. 613.

It is to be remembered, that at the time when this letter was written, there was no such separation existing between the different parts of the Western Church as there is now; nor were the professors of Christianity in the empire of the west classed then into Roman and Reformed as they now are: nor was there any controversy then going on about what are now some of the principal points of difference between these two bodies. Moreover, Columbanus was settled in a part of the world to which the jurisdiction of the bishops of Rome at that time extended: for their authority was acknowledged in a certain sense throughout all the realms of the kings of Bur-

Circumstances of the Church, and of Columbanus, when he wrote to Pope Boniface.

He was living where the Pope's supremacy was admitted.

A. D. 613.

gundy and Austrasia,* and also in the province of Milan,† in which Bobio was comprehended. For these reasons therefore Columbanus was naturally led to address the Roman bishops to whom he wrote, in very respectful terms; but whatever inferences may be gathered from his statements of this sort, relative to his own submissiveness to those bishops, cannot be equally applicable to his countrymen in Ireland, who at that time were entirely independent of any papal jurisdiction. Of himself and his brethren however he speaks as the friends, the followers, the disciples, of the Roman prelates; who regarded Rome with reverence and jealous affection, because of the memory of the Apostles Peter and Paul, who were believed to have preached in that city, and to have received in it the crown of martyrdom.

Superscription of the letter of Columbanus to Boniface IV.

The superscription of the letter at present under consideration is especially remarkable for the accumulation of epithets which Columbanus makes use of in it to express his reverence

* Vid. Opp. S. Greg. Registr. Ep. lib. v. indic. xiii. Epp. 53, 54, 55, from which it appears, that Gregory appointed Virgilius, bishop of Arles, his vicar apostolic in all Hildebert's kingdom, including at that time, Burgundy and Austrasia. In Ep. 54, Gregory commands the French bishops not to disobey Virgilius, nor travel far without his leave.

† When the see of Milan was vacant, the election for a new bishop took place, and also the confirmation of his appointment, by the sanction and authority of the Roman bishop. See Opp. S. Greg. Reg. Ep. lib. xi. ind. 4. Ep. 3, 4.

for the authority which he was addressing, and his humble sense of the great distance between it and the position of one so lowly, in comparison with it, as he himself was; it runs as follows :—

A. D. 612.

“To the most honoured head of all the Churches of all Europe,* to a Pope specially beloved, a Prelate highly exalted, a Pastor of pastors, a most reverend Watchman: to the most dignified, one the most lowly here presumes to write; one who is least to him who is greatest; a rustic to one of polish and refinement; a babbler to one most eloquent; one who is last to him who is first; a stranger to one home-born; a poor humble individual to a mighty one; yea (strange though it be, wonderful though it be to mention, a *rara avis*) it is poor Palumbus† [that presumes to write] to Father Boniface.”

Such is the humble and respectful style with which Columbanus prefaces his letter: but the

* Fleming, or his editor Sirinus (who is copied by the Editors of the Bibl. PP.) prints the original with a comma after *Europa*, thus: “*Pulcherrimo omnium totius Europæ, Ecclesiarum Capiti, &c.*” He evidently perceived that to call the pope “head of the Churches of Europe” only, would not suit well with modern Romanism; and he preferred making Columbanus call Boniface “the most beautiful [pope] of all [the popes?] of all Europe!” thus saving his author’s orthodoxy at the expense of his sense. Todd’s *Church of St. Patrick*, p. 121. The contemptible and unauthorised trick here noticed is passed with expressive silence by Dr. Lanigan, who omits the comma, (*Ec. Hist.* ii. 294;) as does also Languet, (ad an. 612:) and even Mr. Carew (*Eccl. Hist.* p. 256) does likewise. See the entire letter of St. Columbanus in the Appendix to this work, No. 2.

† i.e. “a wild dove:” a name adopted by Columbanus here out of humility, instead of the simple Columba, a dove.

A. D. 613.

Extracts
from the
letter
aforesaid.

The bishops
of Rome to
receive
apostolic
honour, only
while guard-
ing the
apostolic
faith.

terms of the epistle itself, as the Jesuit Historian of the French Church drily remarks, are of a very different character, at least in many places: as the reader will sufficiently see by a few extracts.

“It is not through vanity or forwardness,” says Columbanus, “that I, an humble individual of the very meanest condition, presume to write to persons of such high dignity: for it is sorrow, rather than conceit, that obliges me to express to you, in such a very humble suggestion as befits me, that the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, on account of you, contending as you are on both sides. For I am pained, I confess, at the infamy brought upon the chair of St. Peter I speak as your friend, your disciple, your follower, not as an alien, therefore I will speak with freedom In order then that you may not come short of apostolic honour, preserve the apostolic faith, confirm it by testimony, establish it by writing, strengthen it by a synod, so that no one may justly resist you Let the occasion of schism, I beseech of you, be at once cut off by you, with the knife as it were of St. Peter, that is, by true confession of the faith in a synod, and abominating and anathematizing of all heretics: that so you may purge the chair of Peter from all error, if there have been any, as they say, introduced: or if not, that its purity may be acknowledged on all hands. For it is a painful and lamentable thing, if the

Catholic faith is not preserved in the apostolic see. And that I may say out all, (not to seem to flatter even yourself unduly,) it is also a painful thing to reflect on, that you the party possessed of the legitimate power . . . were not the first to come forward, influenced by zeal for the faith; and, after first proving the purity of your own faith, to condemn or excommunicate the party that dared to defame the principal see relative to the orthodoxy of its faith

A. D. 613.
Possibility
of the Ca-
tholic faith
not being
held at
Rome.

"I would urge you, my fathers and my own patrons, to dispel the confusion from the face of your sons and disciples, who are confounded on your account; and what is of still greater importance, that the cloud of suspicion may be removed from St. Peter's chair. Convoke therefore an assembly, that you may clear away the charges alleged against you; for it is no child's play that you are accused of. For it is the receiving of heretics, as I am informed, that you are charged with, though far be it from gaining credit, as a thing having occurred, or existing, or likely to happen. They say however that Eutyches, Dioscorus, Nestorius, old heretics, as we know them to have been, were countenanced by Vigilius in some Fifth Synod. See there the cause of the entire scandal, as they say, if you too, as they assert, countenance the same persons: or if you know that Vigilius died so

Columba-
nus advises
Boniface to
summon a
council, and
clear his
character
before it.

Columba-
nus supposes
that Pope
Vigilius
died a
heretic:

A. D. 613.

and that the
authority of
his succe-
sors might
therefore be
resisted.

Dignity of
the Roman
bishop capa-
ble of being
lost by
abuses.

infected, why do you bring forward his name in a manner at variance with a good conscience. *For whatever is not of faith is sin.** Now is the fault yours, if you have gone astray from the true confidence, and made void your first faith: [in this case] your juniors deservedly resist you, and deservedly refuse to communicate with you; until the memory of the wicked be effaced and consigned to oblivion. For if these statements be rather certain than fabulous, your sons in their turn are become the head, and you the tail, the very mention of which is painful. Therefore shall they be your judges who have always adhered to the orthodox faith, whoever they be, even though they may appear your juniors

"On account of those two apostles of Christ You are in a manner connected with heaven, and Rome is the head of the Churches of the world,† excepting the singular prerogative of the place of the Lord's Resurrection. And therefore as your honour is great in proportion to the dignity of your see, so is great care necessary

* Rom. ch. xiv. v. 23.

† Dr. Lanigan and Mr. Carew (the two principal Romish writers on the Church History of Ireland) quote part of this passage, but end at the word "*world*." Dr. Lanigan does so both in the English quotation in his text and the Latin one in his note. And both writers end at this word the quotation, the paragraph, and the subject! Is this honest, or would it be a worthy mode of defending truth? Let their readers judge. It is painful to find one of Dr. Lanigan's learning, and so candid as he can afford to be on some occasions, thus led away by the fear of the consequences of truth. Vide Carew, p. 256.

on your part, that you may not lose your dignity through any perversity. For the power shall be yours, so long as right reason shall prevail with you : for he is the true possessor of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, who opens to the worthy by true knowledge, and shuts against the unworthy. Otherwise, if he shall act in a contrary way, he shall not be able, either to open or shut, &c.”

A. D. 613.

It is no wonder if sentiments such as those contained in the preceding extracts, should have utterly perplexed the advocates of Roman supremacy and infallibility, who are as unwilling to assent to the plain statements of Columbanus, or admit their propriety, as they are to give up the saint himself or acknowledge that one of his universally admitted sanctity differed entirely from them on the important subjects in question. Accordingly the attempts of Romish writers to get out of the difficulty, have led them to use statements most jarring and contradictory ; and while some represent Columbanus as a most sound and orthodox Catholic, others think his recorded sentiments so bad and dangerous, that he must have retracted them, or he never could have been looked on as a saint.

A difference of opinion among Roman writers, as to the sentiments of Columbanus.

Mr. Carew, the Maynooth Church Historian, represents Columbanus as if he were a model for Catholics ; and carefully suppresses all notice of his having introduced into his letters to

Opinions of Mr. Carew, &c.

A. D. 613.

the popes (which Mr. C. mentions) any terms in the slightest degree disrespectful to the Pontifical authority. A more recent writer goes farther still, and is bold enough to assert that none of the fathers of the Church bear clearer testimony to the "Catholic" doctrine of Roman supremacy than our own Columbanus.

A Jesuit's
account of
the state of
the case.

But M. Langueval, the eminent Jesuit writer of the history of the French Church, takes quite an opposite view of things, and censures the recorded opinions of Columbanus as most heterodox.— "He did but repeat," says Langueval, "what he heard said by a schismatical party, supported only by calumnies the most absurd which they circulated against the Catholics;" and "it was by following the impressions of a party with which he was unfortunately connected," that he made use of such language, "without perhaps observing the consequences of it!" And further he tells us that "There is no room to doubt that Columbanus retracted these sentiments, when he came to be better instructed. Otherwise the popes would never have taken care to protect, as they did, his monastery at Bobio; and the Church would not have placed him in the number of the saints."

These
different
opinions
compared.

This argument requires no answer, for every body knows that the popes were very glad to get monasteries and churches too under their protection, whenever they could, without caring

much about the opinions of the founders of them who were dead and gone; and as for Columbanus retracting his opinions, that is quite an original idea of M. Languéal, of which older authors were perfectly unconscious, as history contains no hint or shadow of such a circumstance. It must certainly be admitted that the Irishman who loves papal supremacy, has a pretty wide choice between his advocates, as far as the testimony of Columbanus is concerned. In order to enable him the better to select between them, we place their discordant statements before the eye in parallel columns:—

A. D. 613.

Notion of the sentiments of Saint Columbanus, entertained by the recent advocate of the pope's supremacy, in England.

"Of the Fathers of the Church, whether of the West or East, none of them all declares the supremacy of the Roman pontiff in stronger or more unequivocal language, than the Irish St. Columbanus. . . . One is quite dazzled—astounded—dumbstruck by this, as we may truly call it, storm of eloquence," with which he expresses his views on the subject."^{*}

Opinion of the Jesuit Historian of the French Church, with respect to the sentiments of Saint Columbanus.

"There is no room for doubting that Saint Columbanus retracted these sentiments, when he came to be better instructed. Without which . . . the Church would never have placed him in the number of her saints. . . . He did but repeat what he heard said by a schismatical party, supported only by calumnies the most absurd which they circulated against the Catholics."[†]

^{*} See the work entitled, "*Did the Early Church in Ireland acknowledge the Pope's Supremacy? Answered in a letter to Lord John Manners from Daniel Rock, D.D. London, Dolman, 1844.*" pp. 55, 56, and the Rev. W. G. Todd's, *Church of St. Patrick* in reply, p. 150.

[†] Vid. Languéal, *Hist. de l'Egl. Gal.* tom. iii. p. 402. l'An. 612.

A. D. 613.

The more
natural in-
ferences to be
drawn from
the latter in
question,
stated :

Seldom perhaps, if ever, have two advocates of the same cause, drawn more contradictory conclusions from the same testimony of the same witness. Leaving such as will adopt either, to choose between them, we proceed to lay before the reader a few more natural and legitimate conclusions from the letter of Columbanus in question, as set down in a little work more than once quoted already in the present volume. These conclusions are here expressed in the very words of Columbanus himself, as may easily be seen by referring to the original document.*

as given by
the Rev. W.
G. Todd.

From this letter then it would appear ; 1st. That according to the faith of Columbanus, it was possible for the see of Rome to forfeit "apostolic honour," by not preserving "the apostolic faith:"† 2nd, That the "sword of St. Peter" signifies, not temporal power nor spiritual jurisdiction, but "a true confession of the Faith in a synod:"‡ 3rd, That "the chair of St. Peter" is capable of being defiled by doctrinal "error:"§ 4th, That it is possible for "the Catholic faith" not to "be held in the apostolic see:"|| 5th, That an occasion might arise when it would be necessary for the see of Rome "to clear itself" before a synod of the Church:¶

* In the appendix at the close of vol. II. of this work, No. 2. See Todd's Church of St. Patrick, p. 135.

† Vid. sup. p. 308. ‡ ib. § ib. ¶ p. 309. sup. ¶ ib.

6th, That circumstances might justify "junior" or inferior Churches in opposing Rome, and withdrawing from communion with her :* 7th, That these same Churches instead of being her "juniors," or inferiors, might be converted into her "judges," if she preserved not "the orthodox faith :"[†] 8th, That not from any divine appointment, but on account of the sacred memories of St. Peter and St. Paul, Rome "is the head of all the Churches of the world," with the exception of the *singular prerogative of the place of the Lord's resurrection*—to which a higher honour is attached because of its still more sacred associations :‡ 9th, That through "perversity" she might "lose this dignity ;" and lastly, That "unity of faith has made unity of *power and prerogative* in the whole world." With these opinions (as the collector of them justly remarks) no Romanist of the present day could possibly agree.

A. D. 613.

Other inferences from the letters of Columbanus, equally unpalatable to the taste of modern Romanism, could easily be added to these, such as, 1. That the Irish judged it to be lawful for themselves to set down the pope "as a heretic, to be rejected with scorn," if he opposed what they regarded as the best interpretation of the Scriptures : 2. That Columbanus believed Pope

Some additional inferences of a similar character.

* p. 310. sup. † ib. ‡ ib.

A. D. 613.

Vigilius to have died in heresy : and 3. That he considered that he should be justified in separating himself from communion with the popes who came after, if they did not agree to mark with censure the name of the aforesaid Vigilius, supposing that he died in such a state.*

The authority of our old Saints, to be used cautiously in modern controversy.

It appears therefore that those writers of the Church of Rome, who would represent our ancient saints as agreeing entirely in their own general views, are decidedly in error : and that they cannot appeal to such witnesses in confirmation of their system, without eliciting testimony against themselves. We would guard our readers against a similar error on the other side, and not lead them to suppose that the Irish Christians of the seventh century agreed more nearly with ourselves than they really did, according to the accounts of them given in ancient histories. There are points connected with Columbanus, such as for instance, his views concerning vows and monastic celibacy, which mark a clear distinction between his system and our own : for changes and errors in religion came not into the Church in any one year, nor in any one century, but in the gradual progress of time. And we would not point to Columbanus as our standard, but to an authority more ancient and higher than he : for we profess not to follow the

* Vid. pp. 309, 310. sup.

saints of old, either individually or collectively, but only so far as they followed Christ ; nor did the apostles themselves claim a deference beyond this to their own example.*

A. D. 613.

Yet was there much in this eminent individual that we must always regard with veneration and love : his deep reverence for the holy Word of God ; his fervent earnestness in setting forth Christ our Lord as the great, the sole object of the Christian's highest affections ; his boldness in rebuking vice, unawed by the frowns of power, and unsoftened by its smiles ; and not the least among other good and noble qualities, his honest love for Ireland, and the pride and pleasure with which he reverted ever to his native land, delighting to acknowledge and make mention of the soil which gave him birth, among Franks and Lombards, at Luxeu, or at Bobio. These features of his character we admire and love : and as for those other things, on which we believe him to have been in error, we are willing to leave our differences with him to the Judge of all, and to the decision of that standard which the saint himself acknowledged as the highest rule of belief and practice : that so that faith may prevail "which is most in accordance with the Old and New Testaments."

Columbanus dismissed with due commendation.

* 1 Cor. xi. 1.

CHAP. X.

OF THE CHARACTER OF THE EARLY IRISH FOR LEARNING, &c.
BEFORE AND IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY.

A. D. 600.
Literary
fame of Ire-
land in the
early ages.

THERE is no circumstance in the ancient history of Ireland upon which a true Irishman can dwell with more interest and pleasure, than the singular reputation for learning and advancement in Christian knowledge by which this island was distinguished in the first ages after the introduction of Christianity into it. According to the unanimous testimony of our old authors, the Irish people in those times were eminent for the cultivation of letters, philosophy, and sacred studies, and the country was thickly planted in every part with bishops' sees and religious establishments, schools, colleges, and other seminaries of learning, that made it a sort of university to which students flocked in great numbers for the purpose of enjoying the superior advantages that were to be had here in prosecuting all, but especially theological, studies. From the great regard that was had for the honour of God, and the ample means employed for promoting the knowledge and practice of religion, the island was thought worthy of the name of

Insula Sacra, the Sacred Isle, or *Insula Sanctorum*, the Isle of Saints. Yet still many of the princes and people were men of turbulence and blood, and intestine wars and violent deaths often told how many there were still whose minds were occupied with other things than the objects of the Gospel of peace.

A. D. 600.

The literary fame of Ireland in those times is a matter which does not rest for its evidence on any doubtful records, or obscure testimonies of prejudiced writers: it is a circumstance interwoven with the Church History of Europe, and one the truth of which is attested by the most authentic and trustworthy historians of other lands; as we have already seen in some particular instances, and shall presently have an opportunity of observing in others. It is a thing confirmed alike by the evidence of the best and most esteemed annalists, and by the representations contained in ancient legendary writings of less respectable authorship. And even the very names of towns in other countries which are called after Irishmen, afford an unquestionable proof of the high character and eminence to which those particular individuals must have attained, from whom such places are designated. As examples of this we need only refer to Malmesbury in England, and St. Gall in Switzerland.

The fame of Irish learning in old times attested by the best witnesses.

A. D. 600.

An Irish
education,
why sought
after in
those times.

If we look for the causes of the preference given formerly to an Irish education, and consider what were its great attractions, it will easily appear that they were chiefly these two: *First*, the strict discipline observed in the schools of Ireland, which must have tended very visibly to promote the advancement of learning; and *Secondly*, and especially, the knowledge of holy Scripture possessed by our old divines, and the character they maintained for ability in instructing others in it.

The old
Saints of
Ireland
eminent for
the study
and use of
the Bible.

We have already seen how much of this knowledge St. Patrick himself possessed, and need not therefore wonder, that (in a Latin hymn, written by his nephew Secundinus, or St. Seachlin,) he is said to "have found a sacred treasure in the Sacred Volume."* With respect to St. Columba in like manner, we learn from Adamnanus, that his disciples used to support their views, "by referring to the testimony of Holy Scripture:"† and his successors according to Bede "observed only those works of piety and chastity which they could learn in the Prophectical, Evangelical, and Apostolic writings;" and agreeable to this is what is recorded of St. Aidan, that "all who went with him, whether those who had undergone the tonsure, or the

* Colgan, Tr. Th. p. 212.

† Adamn. Vit. S. Columba, t. i. c. 22. lb. p. 143.

laity, were bound to employ themselves in reading the Scriptures or learning the Psalms.*

A. D. 500.

The legends of St. Brigid give us a similar account of her great regard for the Sacred Volume, and constancy in the use of it. The most famous and perhaps the earliest writer of her life, notices that it was her custom to "scatter among all around her the most wholesome seed of the Word of God."† Others of her ancient biographers also tell us, that when out on a journey accompanied by a female friend and a clergyman of her acquaintance, she would have the latter "preach to them the Word of God," as they went along, that the time occupied in their way might not pass by without improvement.‡ And when she and her companions went by invitation to sup with the bishop near whom she lived, she requested of him that he would "refresh their mind with spiritual food" before they partook of that provided for the body; whereupon the bishop, we are told, delivered to them a touching address on the Lord's Sermon on the Mount, which was presently followed by a conversation among them all on the beatitudes at the commencement, and the virtues with which they are connected; and on the best means of practically improving the subject. And when

Illustration
of the fact
from the
legends of
St. Brigid.
A.D. 500.

* pp. 106, 175, sup.

† p. 67, sup.

‡ Colgan, Tr. Th. p. 552. Vit. 4ta. S. Brig. cap. 21.

A. D. 500.

Her daily
study of the
Word of
God.

the bishop returned the visit here mentioned, the same course we are told was pursued ; “ he first refreshed the holy virgin and her companions with the salutary food of the Word of God,” and afterwards, with the clergy who accompanied him, partook of a repast provided for them by his hearers. In fine we are told that St. Brigid made it a general rule, never on any day to indulge in the use of food for the body “ unless her soul were first provided with its proper food, namely, the Word of God.”* These interesting notices occur in legendary narratives containing much that is unworthy the wisdom of a Christian author, much that is unprofitable to write and humbling to read : but yet it is pleasing to find even in such compositions, occasional tributes of due homage to the Inspired Volume, and manifestations of the love and reverence with which it was regarded in better times.

Other
examples of
the esteem
in which the
Bible was
held by the
ancient
Irish.

That the Scriptures were carefully studied by the most eminent of the Irish saints who came after those here noticed, is equally certain. To be convinced of it, one has only to look to the writings of such men as Cumman and Columbanus, and observe in them the manner in which they speak of the Bible, and make use of its language. Dr. Lanigan also, (the Roman Catholic Church Historian of Ireland,) mentions in differ-

* *ib.* Vita 5ta. S. B. cc. 30, 31, 36, pp. 574, 575.

ent parts of his History, circumstances throwing light upon the same point; as for instance, in what he says of St. Petrock, in a passage already quoted:* as also where he states of St. Finnian of Clonard, that he was "distinguished for his extraordinary learning and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures:"† and similarly where he relates that St. Carthagh, grandson of Ængus king of Cashel, went to Gaul, and there "spent some years in the practice of a penitential life and in the study of the Holy Scriptures."‡ And to quote but one other instance from the same author, a remarkable one however, we read§ that while St. Senan was at Inniscarra, "a vessel arrived in Cork harbour, bringing fifty religious persons passengers from the Continent, who came to Ireland either for the purpose of leading a life of stricter discipline, or of improving themselves in the study of the Scriptures," a study "then much cultivated in Ireland," as the original document from which Dr. Lanigan takes this anecdote, observes.|| To these we might add, from other sources, many more examples of the same thing. The legends of St. Kieran of Saigir for instance, relate that this saint when thirty years old, went to Rome, and "spent

A. D. 536.

Fifty persons come from the Continent together, to study in Ireland.

A. D. 536 ?

* p. 126, sup. † Ec. Hist. vol. ii. p. 21. ‡ ib. p. 98.
 § ib. p. 2. || Colgan, A.A.SS. Vita S. Senani, c. 21, pag. 533.

A. D. 536.
S. Kieran's
love for the
Bible.

there twenty years, reading the Divine Scriptures, and collecting copies of them:" and the same legends make out that when Kieran was old, he was still "very humble in all respects, loving much to hear and read the Divine Scripture, even to the age of decrepitude. For it is said of him, that he with other saints of Ireland of that time went in his old age to holy Finnian, abbot of Clonard, renowned for his wisdom, and in his holy school used to read in the Divine Scriptures."*

Common-
ness of the
feeling.

But it would lead us away much too far were I to attempt to set before the reader as large an account as might prove interesting, of what may be collected from true history and legendary narratives on the point in question, viz., the esteem in which the Holy Scriptures were held by the old Irish. Indeed it may be said in a word that the praises bestowed on them for this in their biographies are so common and general, that the expression, "he was most learned in the Scriptures" and other similar ones, become from such frequent use, a little like what are called cant phrases, in the writings alluded to.

Interesting
anecdote of
St. Cuthbert
A. D. 661.

We need not then dwell on this particular. Before leaving it however, there is one interesting anecdote in connection with the subject, recorded by the Venerable Bede, which I cannot

* *ib. Vit. S. Kier. cc. 4, 34, pp. 458, 463.*

omit introducing here for the reader's benefit. A. D. 661.
It gives us an account of the last lesson which St. Cuthbert studied with his preceptor and predecessor Boisil, and I shall give it in the author's own words.* Boisil, finding his end approaching, took occasion to communicate the circumstance to his beloved pupil. "I have to suggest to you," said he, "at the same time, that since my death is near at hand, you ought not to omit to learn some lesson for me while I am yet able to teach you. For my bodily strength and power of speech cannot hold out for giving instruction more than seven days longer. Cuthbert, nothing doubting but that what he said was true, replied, 'And what, I would ask, is it best for me to read, considering that I must be able to finish it in one week?' And he said, 'John the Evangelist. And I have a copy containing seven sheets, one of which we may, with the Lord's help, get through each day, reading it over, and conversing on it with one another, as far as may be requisite.' And they accordingly did as he had proposed, and were enabled to finish the perusal with such great rapidity, because, while occupied with it, they gave their attention only to the simplicity of faith which worketh by love, and not to deep questions. And when the reading of it had come to an end after seven days,

* Vit. Bed. Vit. S. Cuthb. cap. 8.

A. D. 664.

that man of God, Boisil, through the influence of the disease above mentioned, arrived at his last day, and at its close entered with great exultation into the joy of everlasting light."

Many of the English instructed gratuitously in Ireland at this time.

The disease here alluded to was a pestilence which raged in Britain, and carried off great numbers, about A.D. 661; although some, less correctly, refer it to A.D. 664, making it identical with the great plague of the latter year which is famous in history. Bede having made mention of the second one, goes on to say—"This disaster visited Ireland likewise with equal violence. There were in that country at the time we speak of, many of the nobility and of the middle classes too of the English people, who in the time of bishops Finan and Colman, had left their native isle and retired thither, [i.e. to Ireland,] either for the purpose of studying the Word of God, or else to observe a stricter life. And some indeed presently devoted themselves to the monastic profession, while others chose rather to pay visits to the chambers of the different masters, and so to carry on their studies; all of whom the Scots received most cordially, and provided with daily food free of charge, as likewise with books to read, and gratuitous instruction. Among these students were two of the English nobility, named Edilhun and Egbert, youths of excellent parts, the first of whom was the brother of Edil-

win, a man equally beloved of God, who himself also went to Ireland in the following age for the purpose of studying there, and returned to his country well educated ; after which having been appointed bishop in the province of Lindis, he ruled that Church most nobly for many years.”* A. D. 664.

In another part of Bede's history we have an account of a distinguished foreigner who came about this time to be instructed in Ireland. It occurs in the history of the West Saxons. Some years after their conversion to Christianity, we are told that in A.D. 650, “there came into their province from Ireland a certain bishop named Agilbert, a native indeed of France, but who had then spent no small time in Ireland for the sake of reading the Scriptures ; and he associated himself with the king, [of the West Saxons,] taking on himself voluntarily the ministry of preaching ; whose learning and industry when the king observed, he asked him to accept the episcopal see of that place and remain as bishop with his people.”† Agilbert accordingly did so, and remained there many years ; he was afterwards bishop of Paris, and assisted at the synod of Whitby in that character.

Agilbert,
bishop of
Paris,
educated in
Ireland :

In A.D. 685, Alfrid, son of king Oswy, succeeded his brother Egfrid on the throne of Northumberland ; he was as Bede says, “a man most

also Alfrid,
king of
Northum-
berland.

* Bed. Hist. Ec. Lib. iii. cap. 27.

† ib. cap. 7.

A. D. 683.

learned in the Scriptures,"* who when the throne became vacant, "was living as a sojourner in the country of the Scots, and there imbibing heavenly wisdom with all his heart's attention; for he had left his native land and its pleasant fields, to learn in studious exile the mysteries of the Lord."† He was, as we are informed by another famous ancient historian, the elder brother, but thought unworthy of the throne in consequence of his being a natural son; upon which, "either by compulsion, or from indignation, he retired into Ireland. There, safe from any unkindness on the part of his brother, and immersed in literary pursuits, for which he had such abundant leisure, he had gotten his mind stored with philosophy in all its branches."‡

Aldhelm's
letter to
Eahfrid on
the subject.

My readers ought to be by this time pretty familiar with the name of Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury, whom I have had occasion to mention so much already. There is preserved a curious letter of his to a student named Eahfrid, who had just returned home to England from Ireland after having spent six years in study in the latter country. "Why," says Aldhelm to him in this letter, "why should Ireland, whither

* ib. iv. 27. The reader will be careful not to confound this Alfrid with Alfred the Great, who flourished about two hundred years after.

† Bed. in *Carminē de Vita S. Cuthberti*, cap. xxi.

‡ *Gul. Malmes. de gestis Reg. Angl. lib. i.*

students are transported in troops by fleets, be exalted with such unspeakable advantages, as if here in the rich soil of England, there could not be found any Grecian or Roman teachers to expound by their interpretations the dark problems of the celestial library [i.e. the Bible] to inquiring youths? For even though the above-named country of Ireland, a rich and verdant pasture (so to say) for the studious throng of readers to graze in, be ornamented with bright stars like those that glitter in the arch of heaven," yet England, he goes on to say, is not without similar or still higher advantages, if they were but duly estimated; and he refers in particular to Theodore, at that time archbishop of Canterbury, who was a distinguished patron and promoter of learning.*

A. D. 685.

Of the Anglo-Saxons who came to study in Ireland in the latter part of the seventh century, one of the most eminent was the famous St. Willibrord, by whose missionary labours Christianity was propagated among the heathen people of Batavia, Friesland, and Westphalia. This Willibrord was born in Northumberland about A.D. 658; he became afterwards archbishop of Utrecht, and died about A.D. 740. His life was written in Latin both in prose and verse, by Alcuin or Albinus, the most celebrated and universal scho-

The famous missionary St. Willibrord studies in Ireland for twelve years.

* Vid. Ussher's Sylloge.

A. D. 685.

lar of the ninth century, who was preceptor likewise of the famous French emperor Charlemagne. Alcuin tells us that after Willibrord had spent the first twenty years of his life advancing in wisdom, piety, and sacred studies, he then became anxious to lead a stricter life, and also to improve himself by travelling. "And because he had heard that scholastic learning was highly cultivated in Ireland," and being further influenced by the character of certain holy persons living there, whose fame had reached him, especially that of the two named Egbert and Wicbert, "each of whom through love of the heavenly country, leaving home, kindred, and native land, retired to Ireland; and there, divested of worldly cares and wholly occupied with God, was daily imbibing in lonely life the delightful fruits of contemplation on things above; the holy youth therefore, [i.e. Willibrord,] anxious to emulate the religious life of these persons, came with a swift passage into Ireland, with consent of his abbot and brethren; attaching himself to the society of the reverend persons above named, in order that he might, like some very skilful bee, from having them so near him, be able to taste the honey-dropping flowers of piety, and build the sweet comb of virtues in the hive of his own bosom. And there [i.e. in Ireland] for twelve years did this young man, that was afterwards to

become a preacher to many nations, receive instruction from the first masters of devoted piety and sacred learning, until he came to the state of a perfect man, and to the age of the fulness of Christ.”*

A. D. 685.

This extract is from the prose life of Willibrord : in the poetic one likewise Alcuin mentions his birthplace and education, describing him as one “to whom fertile Britain gave birth, and whom *learned Ireland* instructed in sacred studies.”† The same statement is again repeated in the poem, with a slight change in the manner of expression, thus—“as I have already noticed in my verse, fertile Britain was his parent soil, the country of the Scots his noble instructress.”‡ From a comparison of the two last passages it is plain, that in the days of Charlemagne, when Alcuin wrote, (A.D. 800,) the “Scots’ country” and “Ireland” meant one and the same thing.

While strangers were thus attracted to Ireland by the fame of the education that was to be had in the isle, many of the native Irish themselves were in the mean while attaining to much celebrity in other lands, and raising still higher the reputation of their country in those foreign places in which they settled. Of this number the most eminent was St. Columbanus, whose history has been already given in a former chapter. But

Celebrity of the ancient Irish in foreign countries.

* Alcuin. Vit. Willibrord, † Idem. Vita metrica. Init. ‡ Ib. cap. 23.

A. D. 612.

there were many besides, who though less distinguished than he, were yet honoured with considerable renown, and much venerated in the memory of those who came after them. It is right that we should introduce in this place a brief account of a few of the most remarkable names among those here alluded to.

Account of
St. Gallus.

Mention has already been made of Gallus, the disciple of Columbanus, whom the latter, when removing to Italy, left sick at Bregenz.* The circumstance that Gallus was well acquainted with the language of the people among whom he remained, makes it appear not unlikely, that one cause at least of his being left behind, was the hope that he might be useful to them in carrying on the work which Columbanus had begun. But however not liking to remain at Bregenz, he returned, shortly after the departure of Columbanus, to his friend Willimar at Arbona; and soon after settled at a place on the little river Stinace, where now stands the town and abbey of St. Gall. There he lived in much seclusion at first, but afterwards established a small monastic institution on the spot, and employed his time in the instruction of the monks connected with it.†

He is offered
the bishop-
ric of Con-
stance:
A.D. 616?

The see of Constance becoming vacant subsequently to this, a meeting was held for the purpose of electing a new bishop, and Gallus having

* See Lanigan's Ec. Hist. vol. ii. p. 287.

† ib. p. 432.

been invited, was present with the other prelates and clergy who assembled on the occasion. When the question came to be considered, all the clergy present "unanimously agreed that, considering his superior knowledge of the holy Scriptures,* his wisdom, humility, charity towards the poor and singular sanctity, he was the person fittest to be chosen bishop." Gallus however declined accepting the proposed dignity, alleging that it would be more orderly and suitable to elect a native of the district in question to the office; and he suggested to them that his deacon named John, who had been under his own instruction for three years, would be a proper person to fill the vacant see: and this John was accordingly appointed.

A. D. 616.

but declines
to accept it.

On the death of Eustasius, abbot of Luxeu, in A.D. 625, the monks of that establishment resolved to elect Gallus as his successor, and sent a deputation of six members of their community, all Irishmen, to request him to accept the government of Luxeu. He received the offer with due kindness, but again declined to leave his retirement; saying, that, after having left friends and acquaintance to settle where he was, and after having also refused the offer of a bishopric, he was unwilling now to make any change that would again involve him in worldly cares. He lived to

He declines
also the offer
to be made
abbot of
Luxeu.
A.D. 625.

* ib. p. 435.

A. D. 625.
His death.
A. D. 645.

the advanced age of ninety-five years, and died about A.D. 645.* From his assiduity in preaching and his exertions in training others to become teachers, he has been called the Apostle of the Alemanni or Suevi. "Divine mercy," says an ancient chronicle,† "raised up blessed Gallus to be the apostle of the Alemannic people, who being himself an experienced traveller in the way of God, and finding their nation enveloped in paganism, instructed them in the true faith, and brought them out of the darkness of ignorance to the Sun of Righteousness, which is Christ."

Account of
St. Dichuill.
A. D. 612.

St. Deicolus, (in Irish, Dichuill,) maternal brother of St. Gallus, was, like him, a follower of Columbanus, with whom he remained at Luxeu, until his final expulsion from that place. Age and infirmities prevented Dichuill from following his master out of the kingdom, and he therefore, after wandering about a little, settled ultimately at a place called Luthra, (now Lure,) in the district of Besançon.‡ Here being noticed for his religious disposition, he was granted some land by a benevolent person of the neighbourhood, on which he established a monastic institution, that afterwards attained to considerable magnitude and celebrity under the favour and patronage of King Clotaire II. Dichuill died about A.D. 625. His

* Lanigan, *ib.* p. 437. † Notker's Martyrology, (quoted *ib.*) at Oct. 18.

‡ Lanigan, vol. ii. pp. 439, 440.

memory is still held in high estimation by the people of that country, among whom he is known by the name of St. Dié. A legendary writer of this saint's life tells us,* that he took a journey "to Rome, and having made his monastery and lands tributary to the holy see, obtained for it various privileges and exemptions from the interference of kings," &c. But as Dr. Lanigan justly observes, this is a "foolish story," founded on no good authority, and "scarcely worth notice."

A. D. 625.
The story
of his visit
to Rome a
fiction.

But there was hardly any Irish saint of the period which we are now considering, who attained a greater fame than St. Furseus did in England and France as well as in his native land. He was of a noble family,† but of his early life little is known. About A.D. 627, he is said to have had some extraordinary visions, "a detail of which," to use the words of Dr. Lanigan, "the reader will not expect in this place."‡ From these and other revelations made to him he is said to have conceived such an awful horror of the consequences of sin, that he occupied himself thenceforth preaching and persuading men to repentance with the greatest possible anxiety and earnestness.

Life of St.
Furseus.
A. D. 627.

His visions,

and preach-
ing.

* Vid. Colgan, A.A. 88. tom. i. pag. 120. cap. vi.; and Lanigan, vol. ii. p. 441.

† Bed. Ec. Hist. iii. 19. Lan. ii. 448.

‡ Ec. Hist. ii. 455. Vid. Colgan, A.A. 88. tom. i. ad Jan. xvi. et Feb. ix. The revelations in question are curious, and will repay a perusal.

A. D. 627
 He settles in
 England.
 A. D. 637.

Another
 vision of his.

After
 preaching in
 Ireland and
 England, he
 removes to
 France.

Having laboured much in Ireland, and attracted immense attention there, he removed about A.D. 637 to Britain, and came into the province of the East Angles, where "he was honourably received by the pious King Sigberet, and employed himself, as usual, in preaching the Gospel."* Here he had, we are told, another vision, "in which" as Bede says, "he was warned to give diligent and constant attention to the ministry of the Word, which he had undertaken, and to be indefatigable and incessant in his customary watchings and prayers, because his end was certain, but the hour of the same end to remain uncertain, as the Lord saith, *Watch, therefore, because ye know not the day, nor the hour!*"† After this Furseus continued his preaching among the East Angles for some time further, and was instrumental to the conversion of many infidels, and confirmation of many Christians, in that kingdom. His reason for leaving home, according to Bede was, that after "continuing to preach the Word of God to all the people in Ireland for many years, he could not easily bear the tumults of the crowds that pressed to hear him," and he therefore left the country, and "came with a few brethren through the Britons' territory into the province of the Angles; and still preaching the Word of God, as aforesaid,

* Lanigan, ii. 458. Bed, Ec. Hist. ut sup. † ib.

he built in that province a noble monastery.*
 Afterwards to avoid the troubles of the times,
 and the disturbances of the country caused by
 the inroads of pagans, he removed to France,
 and settled at Lagny near Paris, where he erected
 another monastery, about A.D. 644. He died at
 the same place about A.D. 650.

A. D. 637.

It was in the latter part of the seventh cen-
 tury that Maidulf, (or rather Mailduf) having
 left Ireland, became eminent as a teacher in the
 place which was afterwards from him called
Maidulfsburg, and thence in more modern times,
Malmesbury. Maidulf at first led for some time
 a hermit's life in the neighbourhood, but subse-
 quently opened a school in order to earn a liveli-
 hood; and this school shortly after was converted
 into a monastic establishment. Aldhelm, the
 most distinguished of Maidulf's pupils, became
 abbot there in A.D. 675, in which year probably,
 if not before it, the death of the founder took
 place.†

Maidulf
 teaches at
 Ingleborne,
 now called
 Malmes-
 bury.
 A.D. 670.

About the same period flourished the cele-
 brated Irish bishop and martyr St. Kilian, who
 has been surnamed the Apostle of Franconia,
 i. e. the country inhabited by the Eastern
 Franks, whose capital was at Wurtzburg. Kilian
 was in early life distinguished for his piety and

St. Kilian's
 History.

* lb. † Lanigan, Ec. Hist. vol. iii. p. 97, 100.

A. D. 687.

Story of his
visit to
Rome.

He enters
on the
missionary
work in
Franconia.

ecclesiastical learning, and was, before leaving his own country, ordained successively presbyter and bishop.* A desire to increase his religious attainments and improve his experience by foreign travel, combined perhaps with a wish to be engaged in missionary work, afforded the occasion of his first visit to Wurtzburg. When there, being pleased with the appearance of the place and of the inhabitants, he resolved on settling there and preaching the Gospel among them, as they were still heathens. Dr. Lanigan says,† that “he thought it necessary to apply to the holy see for permission to do so.” and it is certainly very possible that he may have judged the sanction of the bishop of Rome necessary, or at least desirable, and likely to be very useful, before commencing such an undertaking in that country; but still, as the writer of his Life from whom this statement is borrowed, is supposed to have lived three hundred and fifty years later than St. Kilian himself,‡ and as no earlier author can be brought forward in proof of the fact of his visit to Rome, it may safely be looked upon as unimportant, and worthy of little attention.

St. Kilian, commencing his missionary labours in A.D. 687, met with such success that large

* Lanigan, Ec. Hist. iii. 115. Passio SS. Kiliani, &c. apud Canis. Lect. Ant. Ed. Basn. tom. iii. par. i. p. 180.

† Ec. Hist. iii. 116.

‡ ib. p. 118, et Basn. ut sup. p. 163.

numbers were led to forsake paganism, and the fame of the new religion before long reached the ears of the nobles of the country and of the Duke Gozbert, their chief ruler, who himself shortly after embraced the profession of the Christian faith, and was baptized by Kilian. But Gozbert while a pagan had married his brother's wife, named Geilana; and although Kilian forbore at first to reprove him for this, until he were somewhat further instructed and established in the faith, he took occasion however at last to do so, and obtained from Gozbert a full promise that he would separate himself from the unlawful connection he had formed. Geilana, upon hearing this, became enraged with passion, and sent an executioner to assassinate him and his two principal fellow-labourers. They were accordingly seized while singing praises in the night-time, and put to death on the spot; this cruelty was perpetrated in A.D. 689.*

A. D. 687.

His cruel death.
A. D. 689.

The names of St. Kilian and his companions have in consequence been placed in the list of martyrs: and he himself is revered at Wurtzburg as the patron saint of that place.† His biographer already alluded to, (who is supposed to have been a monk of Wurtzburg and to have flourished about A.D. 1050) bears the following

* Lanigan, and Canisius, ut sup.: also *Ware's Writers of Ireland*, by Harrie, p. 43.

† Lanigan, iii. 117.

A. D. 689.
 Testimony
 of his
 biographer
 to the cha-
 racter of the
 old Irish.

testimony to his character, and that of the early Irish Christians in general, among the people of Continental Europe:—"Scotland," says he, "which is also called Ireland, is an island of the ocean, fertile indeed, so far as the soil is concerned, but still more illustrious for the eminent sanctity of its people: of whom, Italy glories in Columbanus, Allemagne is enriched by Gallus, and Kilian has ennobled Teutonic France."*

CHAP. XI.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED—THE EIGHTH CENTURY—STATE
 OF RELIGION AMONG THE IRISH AT ITS CLOSE.

A. D.
 700 to 800.
 Literary
 character of
 the Irish in
 the eighth
 century.

PASSING on from the Irish Church History of the seventh century to that of the times which came after, we shall find that our country maintained for several successive ages, more or less of that high reputation for learning which she had at so early a period acquired. Distinguished persons from other countries continued to repair to Ireland for their education: and the Irish themselves still supported their character abroad, and increased the glory of their native land, and its literary distinction and eminence among the nations of Europe.

* Baan. Canis. t. iii. p. 1. pag. 175.

At the beginning of the eighth century, (in A.D. 703,) died the famous Adamnanus, abbot of Iona. He had among the people of that age, a very high reputation for learning and piety, being according to Bede's account of him, "most nobly instructed in the Scriptures."* In A.D. 684, he was sent as an ambassador into Northumbria, to seek the recovery of plunder and captives which the Saxons of that country had carried away out of Scotland: and this mission of his proved a successful one, owing partly, in all likelihood, to his gentle and conciliating address, which Bede mentions with commendation. On occasion of the mission here mentioned Adamnanus had an opportunity of seeing Easter celebrated after the Roman fashion, and was urged to adopt the same himself, and not to persevere in a system in which "there were so very few on his side, and they inhabiting such an out-of-the-way corner of the world."† Adamnanus was in consequence persuaded to adopt the Roman rites, and so returning to Iona, he endeavoured to induce the monks of that place to do likewise; but could not prevail on them. He then sailed into Ireland, and striving to promote the same system there among his countrymen, met with better success; all, generally speaking, except such as were under the control

A. D. 703.
Death of
Adamnanus
A. D. 703.
His character, &c.

His exertions to promote the Roman Easter in Ireland.

* Bed. v. 16.

† Ib.

A. D. 703.

or influence of the college of Iona, being led by his persuasions, to abandon their Irish peculiarities, and adopt the use of the Roman Easter, &c. After this he returned to Iona, and died there.*

His account
of the Holy
Land.

Besides the Life of St. Columba, which is usually attributed to Adamnanus, another work written by him, that attracted considerable notice, was a *Description of the sacred places in the Holy Land*, compiled from accounts furnished to him by one that had visited that interesting country. Bede gives a full account of this work: but the fact that he no where mentions Adamnanus's having written a Life of St. Columba, if it be not a sufficient evidence that Adamnanus was not the real author of that Life, goes to prove, at least, that Bede was not aware of its being his composition.

A doubt
suggested as
to the
genuineness
of his Life of
St. Columba.

Egbert stu-
dies in
Ireland.

A. D.
690—716.

The next eminent individual whom we may notice as having come to Ireland for the purpose of study, is Egbert, the person who, as already mentioned, was the means of persuading the monks of Iona to adopt the Roman Easter. Venerable Bede describes him as a "most reverend and learned father and priest, of the English nation, who for love to Christ had spent a long exile in Ireland, and was both deeply learned in the Scriptures, and

* Bed. v. 16.

eminent for holiness throughout a long life."* Elsewhere, mentioning again this Egbert and Ceadda together, the same writer says, that "they led in Ireland a monastic life, in prayers and continence, and meditation of the Holy Scriptures."†

A. D. 716.

Of the Church History of Ireland in the eighth century generally, we may remark with Dr. Lanigan, that it "presents us with a much smaller number of persons distinguished by sanctity or learning, and of interesting facts, than we have met with in former periods. Yet notwithstanding the scanty accounts that remain of those times, owing either to a neglect in recording transactions, or to the destruction and loss of documents, it is certain that ecclesiastical discipline and learning of every sort such as was cultivated in the eighth century, continued to flourish in this country. Detailed accounts of many holy and learned men of this period cannot be given; but there is no doubt of such, and far from few persons having adorned it."‡

General view of the Irish Church in this age.

Of the Irish who became eminent on the continent of Europe during this age, the most remarkable was the celebrated Virgil, or Virgilius, bishop of Salzburg. His life, as far as we have authentic records of it, is sufficiently interesting; but it is

Life of St. Virgilius, bishop of Salzburg. A.D. 748.

* Ec. Hist. iii. 4.

† Ib. iv. 3. See Lanigan iii. 135.
‡ Ib. p. 176.

A. D. 745.

to be regretted that the earliest account we have of it is a very imperfect one,* and composed in the twelfth century, more than three hundred years after his death. It commences by telling us that "the saintly Virgil, who was born of a noble family in Ireland, applied his mind with such energy to the study of letters, that he might have been regarded as the most learned person among the learned of his age and climate."†

He leaves
Ireland and
removes to
France :

and thence
to Bavaria.

While the famous English missionary St. Boniface was preaching to the heathen tribes east of the Rhine in Germany, there were, it appears, Irishmen also engaged in the same work, of whom St. Virgilius was one. Of the exact part of Ireland in which he was born, and of the time of his birth, we have no particular account : but we learn that he had arrived on the Continent before A.D. 746, having been previously admitted to holy orders. In France he was very kindly received by Pepin, who then under the title of mayor of the palace governed that country ; of which he afterwards in A.D. 752 became king. Virgil is said to have remained with him two years. At the close of this period he removed into Bavaria, the ruler of which at this time was the Duke Otilo, to whose notice Virgil was strongly recommended by his

* Lanigan, iii. 181, 186.

† i.e. probably, of the western world. See Lanigan, ib. Canis. Lect. Ant. t. iii. 2. 287.

kind friend and patron Pepin. This was probably about A.D. 745. Bavaria, with many other parts of Germany was then included under the jurisdiction of St. Boniface, whose mission was conducted under the full sanction and control of the pope's authority.*

A. D. 746.

It was not long before Virgil and Boniface found occasion of serious dispute. Their first quarrel originated in the ignorance of a priest, who not understanding the Latin language used to say the words wrongly in performing the ordinance of Holy Baptism.† Boniface, hearing of this, ordered Virgil and a companion of his named Sidonius, to rebaptize such persons as had been baptized in this way. They however refused to do so, maintaining that the baptisms in question were valid, and ought not to be repeated; and they also sent an account of the whole matter to Pope Zachary, who entirely approved of their conduct, and wrote a letter to Boniface expressing astonishment at the order he had given. He reminded him that a mistake arising from ignorance, and not caused by any wilful intention to introduce error or heresy, could not invalidate the sacred ordinance; and

His quarrel
with St.
Boniface,
about bap-
tism.
A. D. 746.

Pope
Zachary's
decision.

* Lanigan iii. 183.

† This ignorant priest used to say *Baptizo te in nomine Patria, and Filia, and Spiritu sancta*, instead of *Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti*. Vid. Zach. Pap. Epist. vi. apud Labbe et Coss. Concil. tom. vi. col. 1505.

A. D. 746.

Further
account of
their alter-
cations.

that even baptism performed by heretics, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was to be regarded as valid, and not to be repeated anew: an opinion in which the general voice of the Church has for the most part coincided with Zachary and Virgil.

The defeat which Boniface experienced in this controversy did not, we may be sure, improve the state of feeling between him and Virgil. He was in all probability, from the very first, "displeased with Virgilius, because he had come to Bavaria with recommendations from Pepin, and not by order of Boniface himself, and that he was taken great notice of by the Duke Otilo;"* and also perhaps on account of Virgil's not being very submissive to his own authority. Boniface was anxious to have the assistance of the pope's influence in crushing his opponent; and therefore in A.D. 747, or the year following, he wrote a letter to Zachary alleging various charges against Virgil: such as that he used to speak ill of Boniface, "because," said Boniface, "I have shewn that he holds erroneous views of Catholic doctrine;" (although in what respect, we are not told:) and also that in conversing with Duke Otilo, he used to endeavour to sow the seeds of dissension between him and Boniface. "But these are trifles," says Dr. Lanigan,†

* Lanigan, iii. 185. Mabillon, Annal. Bened. ad an. 756.

† Ec. Hist. iii. 183.

"compared with the horrible crime, of which Virgilius was guilty, by maintaining that there was another world and other men under the earth, that is, under the part of the earth trodden by Boniface!" This opinion was founded on the round shape of the earth; and although it was one "which in our days even school-boys are acquainted with, it was new to Boniface; for in those times geographical and philosophical learning was not as much cultivated in other parts of the west as in Ireland."* The manner in which Virgil's views on the subject were reported, "might have misled a pope even more learned than Zachary,"† who appears to have been quite ignorant about such matters: for in his reply to Boniface's letter he says, "But as for the perverse and wicked doctrine of that individual, who has spoken against God and his own soul, if it shall be clearly apparent, that he confesses holding such an opinion, as that there is another world, and other men, under the earth, or a sun and moon there, assemble a council and expel him from the Church, having previously degraded him from the honour of the priesthood."‡ Zachary also says in the same letter, that he summoned Virgil to Rome, to give an account of his

A. D. 748.

Virgil's
belief in the
existence of
Antipodes,
as reported
by Boniface,

denounced
by Pope
Zachary.
A.D. 748.

* *ib.* 185.† *ib.*

‡ Labbe and Coss. Concil. t. vi. col. 1522. Boniface was at this time archbishop of Mentz.

A. D. 748.

Virgil is
made
bishop of
Saltzburg.
A.D. 756.

opinions : but whether he came, or satisfied the pope, or whatever else was the result, nothing further is recorded of the controversy.

Virgilius had become abbot of the monastery of St. Peter's at Saltzburgh before the death of Duke Otilo, which occurred in 748 : and in this situation he seems to have continued until A.D. 756, in which year he was appointed bishop of the same city by Pope Stephen II. and King Pepin. In his new character he became very much distinguished for his active zeal in attending to the wants of the Church under his care and promoting its interests. Besides a fine cathedral at Saltzburg, which he named after St. Rupert, first bishop of the place, he built also many other churches and ecclesiastical edifices ; and was likewise instrumental in extending the knowledge of Christianity into the neighbouring state of Carinthia.*

His exertions for the spread of Christianity in Carinthia.

Chetimar, duke of Carinthia, had in his earlier days been detained as a hostage in Bavaria, where, under the care and instruction of Virgilius, he had been baptized and educated as a Christian. Some time after he was raised to the dukedom, he requested Virgilius, who was then a bishop, to visit his territories and confirm his subjects in the faith, in which they had already been partly instructed. But neither on

* Lanigan III. 184, 205.

this nor on a subsequent occasion when again invited, was Virgilius able to leave Bavaria. He sent however in his stead a bishop named Modestus, and other clergymen at different times, to assist in promoting the interests of the Carinthian Church ; his exertions on behalf of which were such as to gain for him the title of *the Apostle of Carinthia*.*

A. D. 785.

Towards the end of his life Virgil undertook a general visitation of his large diocese, for the purpose of eradicating the remnants of idolatry, and of strengthening his flock in the belief and practice of the Christian religion. He was every where received with the greatest attention and welcomed by crowds of all classes : and during his progress consecrated churches, ordained clergymen, &c. In this visitation was comprised Carinthia, through which he proceeded as far as the frontiers of the Huns, where the Drave joins the Danube. He died soon after his return to Saltzburg, on the 27th of November, A.D. 785.†

His death.
A.D. 785.

The "History of the Reign of Charlemagne" emperor of France, which was written about seventy years after his death, (i.e. about A.D. 884,) by a monk of St. Gallus in Switzerland,‡

Interesting
account of
two learned
Irishmen
patronised
by Charle-
magne.
A.D. 772.

* Lanigan, iii. 206. † ib.

‡ This work is to be found in Canisius, Lect. Ant. tom. ii. part 3 ; and also in the *Rerum Francicarum Scriptores* of Duchesne. Lanigan, pp. 207. seqq.

A. D. 772.

commences with a curious account of two learned Irishmen who came to settle in France at the close of the eighth century. "When the illustrious Charles," says this writer, "had begun to reign alone in the western parts of the world, and literature was everywhere almost forgotten, it came to pass that two Scots from Ireland, men incomparably learned both in human knowledge and in the Holy Scriptures, came over with some British merchants to the shores of France." These persons, he goes on to say, stood every day in the public place where persons came together to buy and sell, and there used to cry out to the people, "If any person wishes for wisdom, let him come to us and receive it, for we have it to sell." This strange proceeding of theirs attracted as might have been expected much attention, and was at length reported to Charlemagne himself, who caused the two strangers to be sent for and introduced into his presence. He was much pleased with their conversation, and kept both of them with him for some time; after which he appointed one of them, named Clement, head of a college in France, entrusting to his care a large number of youths, some of the highest nobility, and others of the middle and even the lowest classes of the people. Where Clemens kept his school, is not ascertained, although some writers have said that it was at

Paris, and others go so far as to make out that he was the founder or first teacher of the famous university in that city. The other of these Irishmen (whose name is said to have been Albinus) was appointed to a similar charge near Pavia in Italy.

A. D. 772.

Much more might be said here of the learning and schools of ancient Ireland, but enough has been advanced to put the matter in a pretty clear light, and to show that if ignorance existed on the subject, it arises not from want of evidence of the most unimpeachable character, but from the generality of persons being for the most part ignorant of the evidence or unconcerned about it. To the many original testimonies already adduced in illustration of the point before us, it may be interesting to add here in conclusion, an extract from the more modern comment of England's greatest antiquary, the learned Camden, contemporary of Archbishop Ussher. "Our Anglo-Saxons of that day," says this eminent author, "used to flock together to Ireland, as a market of learning; whence it is that we continually find it said in our writers concerning holy men of old, *He was sent away to be educated in Ireland....* And it would appear that it was from that country the ancient English our ancestors received the first instructions in forming letters, as it is plain they used

Camden's remarks on the literary reputation of ancient Ireland.

His opinion that the English learned the use of letters from the Irish.

A: D. 788.

the same character which is still used in Ireland. Nor need we wonder that Ireland which is now (i.e. in A.D. 1607) for the most part wild, half-savage, and destitute of education, should at that time have abounded in men of such holiness, piety, and splendid geniuses, while the cultivation of literature elsewhere in the Christian world lay neglected and half-buried; since the Providence of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe is pleased to scatter the seeds of holiness and virtues in the different ages of the world, now among these nations, now among those, as it were in so many beds and flower-knots; thus producing blossoms, which as they appear in one place and another with fresh vigour, may thrive and be preserved, for His own glory and the benefit of mankind.”*

Corruptions
introduced
into religion
among the
Irish before
A.D. 800.

But whatever may have been the reputation of our country in this age, for the literary and theological distinction to which her sons attained, at home or abroad, the historian of truth must not however conceal the melancholy fact, that even at so early a period as the close of the eighth century, notwithstanding the general circulation of Scriptural knowledge among the Irish Christians of that period, serious corruption had already begun to sully the purity of the faith professed by our forefathers in this land, and

* Camden's Britannia. Lond. 1607. page 730.

practices grossly superstitious came even then to be mistaken for true devotion. Nor was this degeneracy confined to the ignorant and vulgar, but manifested most remarkably by some of those that were thought most worthy of mention for their learning and piety. A lamentable instance of this occurs in the account given us of the famous Ængus, surnamed the Hagiologist, the following brief abstract of which will enable the reader more fully to understand the observations here made.

A. D. 788.

Of the details of Ængus's life we know little. We are told however that he embraced the monastic state in the monastery of Clonenagh in the Queen's county, where he soon became distinguished for his progress in piety and learning. He was fond of solitude, and spent much of his time in retirement, for the purpose of reading the psalms and occupying himself in prayer. After some time he removed to the monastery of Tallaght, within five miles of Dublin, to which he was attracted, we are told, by hearing of the strict and exemplary manner in which St. Melruan, who was then abbot and bishop at Tallaght, governed the monastery of that place. There, it is probable, that Ængus remained until the death of Melruan, which occurred in A.D. 788. In the latter part of his life, he returned again to Clonenagh, where he was afterwards abbot

Account of
Ængus the
Hagiologist.
A.D. 788.

A. D. 788. and bishop. The year of his death is unknown.*

Writings of
Ængus.

His Feilire.

Several works are attributed to Ængus. He and Melruan are considered to have been joint compilers of the very copious martyrology of Tallaght, which was however increased after their time by the insertion of additional matter, as appears from the circumstance that Ængus and Melruan are themselves mentioned among the saints, whose festivals are enumerated in this work. Ængus also composed in Irish verse a smaller work of the same sort, entitled his *Festilogium*; (or *Feilire*, as it is called in Irish;) i.e. a Calendar of the Saints, arranged according to the days of the year on which their memories are honoured. To each day are assigned two Irish verses, comprehending only some of the principal saints. This work appears to have been intended by Ængus for use in his private devotions. He wrote also another treatise on the saints of Ireland, which is sometimes called *Saltuir-na-rann*, i.e. the Metrical or Multipartite Psalter: it is divided into five small books, four of which are occupied with enumerations of various classes of Irish saints, their genealogies, &c.; and the fifth contains a collection of litanies. There is another *Saltuir-na-Rann*, a poetical work, written also by Ængus, comprising

* Lanigan iii. 232, 244, seqq.

the history of the Old Testament, which he put in the form of prayers and praises to God.* A. D. 788.

It was in consequence of his being the author of the compositions above-mentioned, that the surname of Hagiologist (i.e. *a writer about saints*) was given to this Ængus. He is also known by the epithet of Ceile-De,† (i.e. a servant or companion of God,) a title bestowed on him to mark the great reputation in which he was held for his piety and self-denial. Why he was called Hagiologist, and Ceile-De.

The piety of Ængus however, so far as we can judge of it by the remains of his writings which have come down to our times, is such as can meet with little sympathy in the mind of a well instructed and enlightened Christian : for the most striking and remarkable point in those Litanies of his above-mentioned, (as forming part of the *Saltuir-na-Rann*), is the circumstance that they comprise numerous invocations addressed to a vast number of dead saints ; including several groups of individuals from foreign countries, that had come to live in Ireland, and whose remains are represented as lying in particular parts of the island, specified in the several petitions. The two following sentences from the His superstitious Litanies, and invocation of the dead.

* *ib.* Colgan, A.A. SS. p. 581.

† It has been supposed that this name *Ceile-De*, in its derivation and use, was the same with *Culdee*, a title afterwards applied to certain clergymen : but this appears to be a mistake : nor can we tell whether, so early as the time of Ængus, there were any Culdees Lanigan iii. 248.

A. D. 788.

Litanies of Ængus will give the reader a sufficient idea of the nature of those unscriptural invocations:—

Extracts
from his
Litanies.

“ I invoke to my aid the Roman saints that are lying in Achadh Galma . . . through Jesus Christ.

“ I invoke the seven holy Egyptian monks who are lying in Desert Ulidh,” &c.*

In some of the groups which are thus invoked

* Vid. Colgan, AA. 88. p. 539, not. 11. In this note, which refers to the passage in St. Senan's Life, (cap. 20,) relative to the fifty Roman monks coming to study in Ireland, the Litanies of Ængus are quoted to shew what numbers of persons came from foreign lands to settle in Ireland, attracted by its reputation for literary advancement and monastic discipline. “ In this passage, gentle reader,” says Colgan, “ you have some evidence of that high opinion, which the Romans, and other nations of Europe, entertained in former times, of the sanctity and learning of this sacred isle. For in those golden days immediately subsequent to the first dissemination of the faith in our land, and for some ages following, it was regarded not only as a kind of training institution for missionaries to heathen lands, but likewise as a second Thebais for cherishing the exercises of ascetic life, and a general school of the west for the cultivation of the study of philosophy and of the Holy Scriptures: so that I can scarce tell whether it has attained to greater glory from having produced and sent forth into the world, doctors and apostles, almost without number, or from the circumstance that the countless instances of the arrival, settlement, and sepulture, in our land, of Italians, Gauls, Germans, Britons, Picts, Angles or Saxons, and persons from other nations, who flocked here, desirous of the benefits of strict discipline, or improvement in learning, have been such, that the place might well be called a general institute of polite literature for Europe, and a general retreat for the followers of the ascetic life. Most abundant and interesting evidences of these statements are to be found in our histories, and particularly in the Lives of SS. Patrick, Kieran,” &c. Colgan then, as already mentioned, quotes in proof of the same circumstance a long extract from the Litanies of Ængus, consisting of a number of invocations similar to those given in the text above.

in these Litanies, as many as one hundred and fifty dead saints are included together. No more decisive proof can be needed, of the miserable perversion of Christianity, which was at this time, at least by many, mistaken for true religion. The Almighty Creator of mankind was calling sinners, in mercy and love, to come to himself that they might have life; He was encouraging them in His own blessed Word* to come, with assurances of pardon and favour, if they would but seek these benefits in fervent faith, relying on his promises, and looking for acceptance with Him in the way of His own appointment, through the name and intercession of His Son our Saviour: but instead of this, they to whom these gracious mercies were proposed, applied for spiritual aid to those that had no power (so far as we know) even to hear the sound of their prayers, thus turning from the living God, to invoke dead men, through the intervention of a Divine Mediator. Willingly would I believe, if any proof could be adduced in favour of the supposition, that these Litanies of *Ængus* were falsely fathered upon him, and were but spurious compositions of a later age. But of this there is no evidence; and it seems only too sadly certain, that they are indeed genuine, and that they only prove what

A. D. 788.

Their
genuineness.

* Vid. S. Luke, xv. 21. S. John vi. 35, 37. Acts ii. 21. Rom. x. 12. Eph. ii. 18. Heb. iv. 16.

A. D. 788.

is sufficiently confirmed by other authorities, and so cannot reasonably be contradicted. Such doctrines and practices were not however as yet made binding on men's consciences by any law; and we may charitably hope that there were still many in the land, who favoured not these gross corruptions, but were led from the reading of God's holy Word, and the enlightening of His good Spirit, to live by a purer faith, and cherish a tone of piety more in accordance with what was revered in earlier and better times.

The study
of our
ecclesiastical
history in
some part
unsatisfac-
tory;

We have now arrived at the close of all that it seemed expedient in this work to bring before the reader concerning those of the ancient Irish saints who flourished in the period of our Ecclesiastical history preceding the Danish invasions. And it must certainly be confessed, that whatever interesting particulars or important facts are comprised in the field which we have thus passed over, it certainly affords much less matter for "godly edifying which is in faith,"* than might at the commencement of such a subject have been anticipated or wished for. So that however the Christian student may desire information of this kind, relative to the lives and histories of our ancient saints, and whatsoever important uses the study may be turned to, there is notwithstanding, a limit, at which the mind of

* 1 Tim. i. 4.

the general reader, at least, may well feel satiated, and rest contented without further attainments in the sort of knowledge of this subject, which the remains of antiquity that have been preserved to our time can supply. And when truth has been searched for, often with little success, among the rubbish of legendary tales which form so large a part of the written documents of Irish ecclesiastical antiquity, the mind of the reader may well turn back with increase of joy and thankfulness, to "the faithful Word" of divine inspiration; reading its holy lessons of heavenly wisdom with new admiration, and blessing God, that for the inheritance of its cheering promises, it is not necessary to unravel the frail and tangled thread of history which connects our times with those of the first Christians in Ireland, or to be very deeply read in the ecclesiastical antiquities of the country.

A. D. 788.

but calculated to make us love more the study of the holy Scriptures.

In fact, the difference of character observable between the holy contents of the Word of God, and the wretchedly unprofitable matter which abounds in the biographical memoirs of the saints alluded to, is not more striking, than the difference of the principles and motives which influenced the writers of the two different classes of compositions in question. The Word of God was written that God Himself might be glorified, and that man might be made wise unto salvation:

A marked difference of design and character, between the Holy Scriptures, and the Lives of our saints.

A. D. 800.

The want of
candour in
the biogra-
phers of our
saints, con-
fessed by
Roman
Catholic
writers.

and it therefore comprehends all that is most for the exaltation of the Creator ; while at the same time, in the examples that are given us in that sacred volume, of the most holy and faithful servants of God whose lives are there recorded, a true and impartial account is introduced, of their infirmities, falls, and sins, as well as of their faith and virtues : that we may still remember that they were men, weak and imperfect like ourselves, whose dignity and eminence arose only from the power of God working in them ; His majesty being exalted, when His strength was made perfect in their weakness. On the contrary, the Lives of our ancient saints, as we have them, were to a great extent, confessedly, written that *man* might be glorified ; and therefore, instead of being true and impartial historical documents, giving a just account of the weaknesses and defects of the saints, as well as of their glories and triumphs, they are rather one-sided and prejudiced accounts, omitting and concealing whatever might tend to exhibit in an unfavourable point of view, the character of the person described ; and enlarging, in undue proportion, on such circumstances as were calculated to increase his reputation in the judgment of the reader.

The truth of the statements here made is candidly admitted by the learned Roman Catholic

historian of the ancient Irish Church: who having mentioned the Life of St. Virgilius written in the twelfth century, goes on to remark, "that in works of that kind, particularly such as were made up in the dark ages, silence was usually observed with regard to quarrels between holy men. In fact," adds Dr. Lanigan, "the so called Lives of saints, written in those times, are in general panegyrical discourses rather than biographical tracts, and every thing is omitted that might throw the least reflection on the conduct of the saint at any time of his life."* Nor is it difficult to conceive that those writers, who thus omitted true circumstances for the sake of saving the reputation of their heroes, may have been equally ready to insert, on too slender evidence, what was not true, where it seemed in their judgment likely to tell to the credit of those of whom they wrote.

And thus may be accounted for a great many of those mischievous and anti-scriptural opinions and practices, which, in the writings here referred to, are attributed to some of our most famous ancient worthies, but which savour more strongly of the age when their biographers flourished, than of themselves or of the times in which they lived. And so, when we are told of St. Senan, that on occasion of the prince of the territory in

A. D. 900.

The characters of the old Irish saints injuriously treated by their biographers.

* Lanigan, Ec. Hist. iii. 186.

A. D. 800.

which his monastery was situated, sending a message to him, "demanding of him tokens of homage and subjection, the holy man refused, saying that he did not acknowledge any secular lord, to whom he was to owe secular homage or tribute;"*—and again, when we are told of St. Finnian of Clonard, that once, when he was at some work, and a disciple of his reading the Scriptures near him, the latter observed a worm fall to the ground from his wounded body, that was torn by an iron belt which he wore for the purpose of macerating his flesh;†—when we read such things as these, could we believe the facts to be true and correctly stated, we should be compelled to pronounce the men that could be capable of acts of rebellion and superstition like those here mentioned, to be little worthy of the appellation of Christian saints. As it is however, having some room to choose between the saints and their biographers, and seeing that conduct such as is here noticed may be attributed to the imagination of the latter, with as much probability as to the principles of the former; and seeing moreover that there are circumstances which justify us in some degree, in disposing of them in the first way, we may hope that they were inventions of the writers rather than true

* Vid. Vit. S. Senani, apud Colg. A.A. SS. p. 583, cap. xxi.; and compare Rom. xiii. 1-7.

† Vit. S. Fin. ib. p. 396, cap. xxix.

circumstances in the lives of the saints of whom they wrote, thus saving the credit of the latter, at the expense of the veracity of the former.

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In bringing the present volume to its conclusion, it may be useful to lay before the reader a brief account of the state of religious doctrine in the Irish Church at the period to which our inquiries thus far have brought us. And we may remark in general, that for the first two centuries after the introduction of Christianity into the country, the doctrines taught and received by our forefathers were altogether pure and scriptural, and free in general from the corruptions of later times:—a state of things which lasted for the most part until, at least, the middle of the seventh century. The only striking encroachment on the apostolic system which forms an exception to this statement, is to be found in the matter of monastic celibacy, to which an unscriptural notion of its necessity or merit appears to have been attached, from a very early period of our ecclesiastical history. Before the close of the eighth century however, much more serious corruption had been introduced, as we have already seen from the evidence afforded by the litanies of Ængus.* The general aspect of religion in this country at the period at which we have arrived, will be some-

State of religion in Ireland at the close of the eighth century, and the views then held,

* pp. 355, seqq. sup.

A. D. 800.

what better understood from the following short summary of its particular features, as then existing:—

of the Holy
Scriptures;

1. As for the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures, so far from being in any way prohibited, it was, down to the close of the period comprehended in this volume, and for some ages afterwards, encouraged and promoted among all classes, so far as the state of education in the community, and the supply of copies made the thing possible. The Bible was referred to as the chief and only supreme authority in matters of religion, and that, independently, it would seem, of any particular system of notes or comments upon its meaning.* The Irish did not however despise the assistance to be derived from the labours of commentators, but held it in much esteem, as we have seen in the case of St. Jerome's commentaries in particular.† Nor were the Scriptures withheld from the young and ignorant: they were on the contrary among the first books of instruction placed in their hands in the monastic schools.‡

their para-
mount
authority
and suffi-
ciency;

their inter-
pretation,

and general
use.

The original
languages of
the Bible
appealed to
by the old
Irish.

The modern Church of Rome, by a decree of the Council of Trent, has declared the Latin Vulgate to be "the *authentic* edition"§ of the

* Vid. pp. 155, 296, 299. sup.

† p. 291. sup.

‡ p. 252.

§ *Canones et Decreta Concil. Trid.* Rome, 1564, p. 21, quoted in *Marsh's Comparative View*, pp. 23, 80.

Scriptures for use among her people, and if she can establish a doctrine by this her authorised version, "no appeal is allowed, either to the Hebrew in the Old Testament, or to the Greek in the New:" but it is the glory of our reformed Church, that, in the exposition of Scripture, her children enjoy the liberty of appealing to the inspired originals.* And in this point the ancient Irish agreed with us; for although the Latin translation was received into common use among the learned, yet they often criticised and corrected it by a reference to the original text; as Archbishop Ussher has shewn in many instances.†

A. D. 800.

As for the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament, "true it is," as the same learned author observes, "that in our Irish and British writers some of them are alleged as parcels of Scripture and prophetic writings; those especially that commonly bare the name of Solomon. But so also is the fourth book of Esdras cited by Gildas,† in the name of 'blessed Esdras the prophet,' which yet our Romanists will not admit to be canonical; neither do our writers mention any of the rest with more titles of respect than we find given unto them by others of the ancient fathers, who yet in express terms

Use of the
Apocrypha
among
them.

* Marsh, ib. pp. 118, 119. † See his Religion of the A. I. chap. i.

† Gildas, Epist. quoted by Ussher, ib.

A. D. 800.

Its inferiority to "the divine Scriptures" admitted.

Views of our fore fathers respecting Roman infallibility.

do exclude them out of the number of those books which properly are to be esteemed canonical." Thus far Ussher. He might have added, that this improper way of speaking, in use with our ancient writers, did not prevent their general doctrines and statements from being "godly and wholesome" and "necessary for the times," in which they lived, as well as those contained in the Book of Homilies of the Church of England, which also quotes the apocryphal writings as if they were part of "the infallible and undeceivable Word of God."* Yet Marianus Scotus, who was born in Ireland in A.D. 1028, was more careful, as Ussher observes, to maintain the ancient bounds of the Canon of Holy Writ; for he makes a clear distinction between "the divine Scripture of the Hebrews, and "the book of the Maccabees," which he classes with "the writings of Josephus and Africanus."

2. It appears quite certain that the infallibility of the Church of Rome was not a doctrine received by the ancient Irish in the period comprehended in this volume.† But many of them at least respected the general consent of the

* See the tenth Homily, *Of obedience to Magistrates*, part i., where the apocryphal book of Wisdom, (ch. vi. vv. 1, 2, 3,) is quoted under these titles. Similar quotations of the Apocrypha as Scripture may be found in other parts of the Homilies, e. g. Homily ix. *Against the fear of Death*, part iii.; the Homily *Against peril of idolatry*, &c.

† Vld. pp. 163, 309, 310. sup.

Catholic Church as a weighty "authority in A. D. 800. controversies of Faith."*

3. Nor was the supremacy of the Church of and supremacy: Rome acknowledged among our forefathers in those times. They were very far indeed from receiving that Article of Pope Pius's Creed which makes that Church the mother and mistress of all Churches.†

4. As to the mode in which sinners are to be concerning justification; justified in the sight of God, the earliest Irish Christians held, so far as we are acquainted with them, a pure and Scriptural doctrine. In the time of Adamnanus however we find some statements on the subject obscure and unsatisfactory, apparently shewing a deviation from the simplicity of the Scriptures, and a leaning to error.‡ Yet in other writings of even a later period the views put forth on the subject are sufficiently in accordance with the primitive apostolic faith.

5. Transubstantiation was not held among the transubstantiation; Irish (any more than elsewhere) down to the period at which we have thus far arrived. Dr. Lanigan indeed labours to prove that they did receive this doctrine; but his arguments (derived for the most part from the expressions which

* See the 20th Article in the Book of Common Prayer.

† Vid. ch. iiii-vi. sup. et *passim*.

‡ See the statements of St. Columbanus quoted above, pp. 302, 303; and Adamnanus, Vit. S. Col. lib. iiii. cc. 19, 20.

A. D. 800. they made use of with regard to the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper) are such as would equally prove that the Church of England holds the same anti-scriptural view of the corporal presence: the language used by the old Irish being only such as is in harmony with that of her formularies, and such as all good Catholics may use with little scruple.*

Communion
under both
kinds;

6. As to Communion under both kinds, by Roman Catholics themselves "it is not denied, that in old times it was practised in Ireland, as well as every where else."†

purgatory;

7. There is no conclusive evidence that the Irish of the seventh century generally believed in the existence of a purgatory or intermediate state of purification between heaven and hell after death; or that such was their doctrine in the eighth century. Nor is there any better proof that they cherished the use of prayers for the dead connected with purgatory.

and invoc-
tion of
saints.

8. Of invocation of saints, so far as to the seventh century, we find no instances among the old Irish: but from the account given in this chapter, it appears plainly, that by the close of the eighth century, the grossest corruption in this particular had become prevalent.‡

* Vid. Lan. iii. 305; and compare the Communion Service and Catechism of the Church of England and Ireland. † Lan. iii. 310.

‡ To prove that they used invocation of the dead in the seventh century, some better argument must be adduced than one depending on such questionable authority as that of Brogan referred to by Lanigan iii. 254, and i. 379.

9. The language used in Divine Service in these countries in the earliest ages, appears to have been always the Latin, so far as we can learn from any evidence that remains of ancient documents relating to the subject. Latin seems to have been used as being the language of the first Christian teachers of the Irish :* who under the influence of a pious but injudicious zeal, considered probably that their own language, (as being generally spoken in most parts of the west of Europe, and by the most civilized and enlightened nation of the world at that time,) was better adapted than the Irish, for conveying religious knowledge and Christian truths to the minds of our heathen ancestors : a course similar to that which was afterwards pursued with regard to the English language, (but with disastrous consequences,) by the promoters of the Reformation in Ireland. We have the testimony of Bede that for a time the learning of the Scriptures and of the Latin tongue, went, at least to some extent, hand in hand ;† but afterwards, when Latin died away

A. D. 800.
The language used in divine service by the old Irish, the Latin; and why.

* St. Patrick possibly understood the native tongue of the Irish people; but his fellow labourers and their successors were not perhaps possessed of the same advantages. vid. pag. 22. sup.

† Bede's words are, "In the languages of five nations doth this island, [i.e. Britain] examine and confess one and the same knowledge of the highest truth, and of true sublimity; namely, in those of the English, the Britons, the Scots, the Picts, and the Latins, which last," he adds, "is by the meditation of the Scriptures made common to all the rest."—Ec. Hist. i. 1.

A. D. 800.

Bede a translator of the Bible into the vulgar tongue. A.D. 735.

Of clerical celibacy among our forefathers.

Their estimation of the Lord's day.

out of use as a spoken language, it was still improperly retained, even where not understood, in divine ministrations.* The vulgar tongue however was not considered unfit for use in the service of God; it was on the contrary permitted, and much approved of even by the authority of a pope (John VIII.) in A.D. 880:† and one of the last occupations of Venerable Bede at the time of his death, was the completing of a translation of the Gospel of St. John, into Saxon, the vulgar tongue of the people of his native land.‡

10. The idea of the necessity, or paramount importance, of celibacy as a rule for the clergy, prevailed at a very early period, in most parts of the Church; and although "from the beginning it was not so," yet few instances of the contrary can be cited from our ancient writers, so that the general practice of our forefathers in this matter would appear to have been pretty much in accordance with the law which was afterwards enforced.

11. It is interesting to observe, that the Lord's day was honoured by the early Irish Christians, (as well as by those of England and other countries,) with peculiar veneration, and

* Vid. p. 345. sup.

† Vid. Appx. No. 5.

‡ Vid. Cellier, Hist. des Aut. Eccl. tom. xviii. p. 3. Paris, 1732; and Mabillon, AA. SS. O.S.B. Sec. iii. par i. p. 503. Venet, 1734.

set apart for religious improvement and learning of the Word of God, at least by such as were most earnest and sincere in their piety.* By such persons all secular business, travelling, writing in public offices, &c., unless in cases of extreme necessity, was deemed unlawful. And it is recorded of some of the old saints of Ireland, that they observed this rule so strictly, that on a journey, wherever they heard the first sound of the vesper bell on Saturday evening, as the day of rest came on, there they would stop for the next day and night, until Monday morning, occupied with the praises of God, and the contemplation of divine and heavenly things.

Thus far have I endeavoured, as fairly and impartially as I could, to give the reader some idea of the state of religion among the Irish

A. D. 800.

Conclusion
of the sub-
ject thus far.

* Vid. Colgan, *Trias Th.* p. 99. cap. 156: AA. 88. p. 128, cap. 38, &c. The following enactment on the subject was passed at the Synod of Cloveshove, in England, under Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 747. "In the fourteenth place, it is enacted, that the Lord's day be celebrated by all people with due veneration, and be devoted exclusively to divine worship: and that all abbots and priests on that most sacred day, shall remain in their monasteries and churches and perform the solemnities of masses; and that, setting aside all extraneous matters of business, and secular cares, and travelling, unless some unavoidable necessity compel them, they shall instruct the flocks committed to their care, by preaching to them on passages out of the Holy Scriptures, concerning the rules of religious conversation and good living. And further, it is also decreed, that on that day, or on other of the greater holidays, the people invited off by God's priests shall come to Church to hear the Word of God; and attend carefully upon the sacraments of masses, and sermons upon Christian doctrine."—Vid. Labbe and Coss. *Concil. tom. vi. col. 1577, et Theodori Capitula, vii. and xxiii. ib. col. 1875.*